

T H E FANTASTIC FOUR®



MARVEL MASTERWORKS®
BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY





THE FANTASTIC FOUR®



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BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS PROUDLY PRESENT THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS COMICS AND SUPER HEROES FROM THEIR VERY BEGINNINGS IN A SERIES OF PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED ARCHIVAL VOLUMES.

COLLECTING *The FANTASTIC FOUR* #41-50
& ANNUAL #3





THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



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MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP 12¢

**"THE BRUTAL
BETRAYAL
OF
BEN GRIMM!"**

FOUR

POSSIBLY THE MOST
DARINGLY DRAMATIC
DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD
OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE!



THE FABULOUS **FANTASTIC FOUR** ARE STUNNED BY!

"THE BRUTAL BETRAYAL OF BEN GRIMM!"

LAST MONTH WE SAW THE F.F. DEFEAT **DR. DOOM!** BUT IN ORDER TO GAIN THAT VICTORY, IT WAS NECESSARY ONCE MORE TO CHANGE BEN GRIMM INTO THE GROTESQUE **THING!** NOW BITTER AND FRUSTRATED, THE ORANGE-SKINNED POWERHOUSE DECIDES TO **QUIT** THE FANTASTIC FOUR ...!

WAIT UP, BIG BUDDY!
I WANNA TALK TO YOU!

BEN! COME BACK! YOU CAN'T JUST WALK OUT THAT WAY! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

HE'LL NEVER FORGIVE ANY OF US, DARLING! WE'VE LOST HIM!

LEGGO! I'M CUTTIN' OUT!
I'M THROUGH!

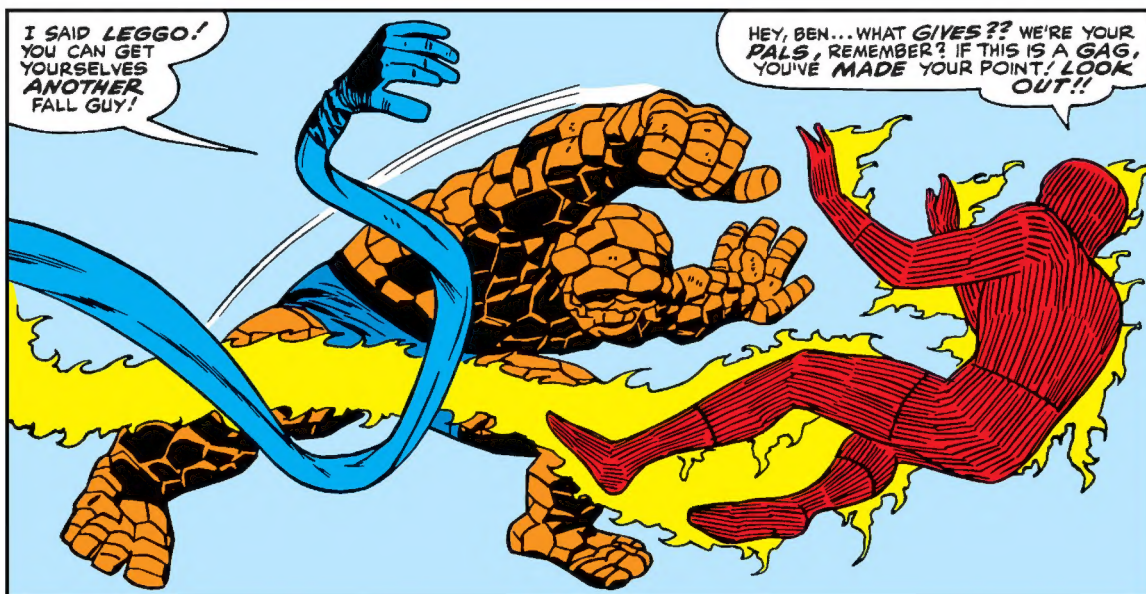
ONLY MIGHTY MARVEL COULD BRING YOU SUCH A SHOCKER... DESTINED TO BECOME THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT ACTION-THRILLER OF THE YEAR... FEATURING AN ALL-STAR CAST!

STORY BY: **Stan Lee**, WHO HAS NEVER LOST HIS TOUCH!

ART BY: **Jack Kirby**, WHO HAS NEVER LOST HIS MAGIC!

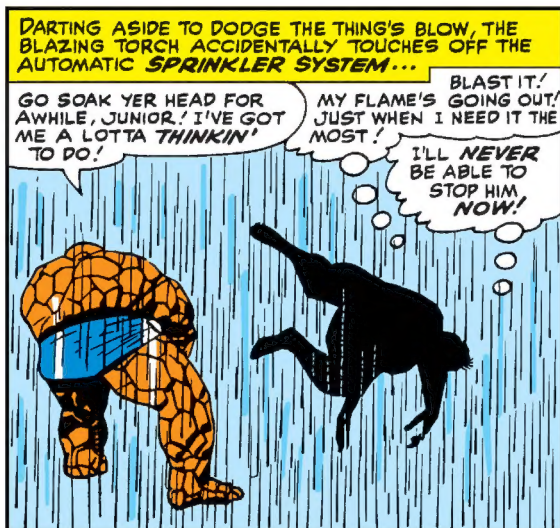
INKING BY: **Vince Colletta**, WHO HAS NEVER LOST HIS FLAIR!

LETTERING BY: **Sam Rosen**, WHO HAS NEVER LOST ARTIE SIMEK!



I SAID **LEGGO!**
YOU CAN GET
YOURSELVES
ANOTHER
FALL GUY!

HEY, BEN... WHAT *GIVES??* WE'RE YOUR
PALS, REMEMBER? IF THIS IS A **GAG**,
YOU'VE **MADE** YOUR POINT! **LOOK**
OUT!!



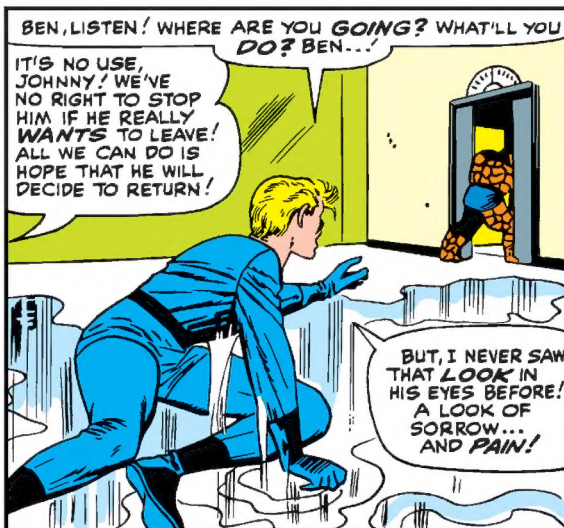
DARTING ASIDE TO DODGE THE THING'S BLOW, THE
BLAZING TORCH ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHES OFF THE
AUTOMATIC **SPRINKLER** SYSTEM...

GO SOAK YER HEAD FOR
AWHILE, JUNIOR! I'VE GOT
ME A LOTTA **THINKIN'**
TO DO!

MY FLAME'S GOING OUT!
JUST WHEN I NEED IT THE
MOST!

BLAST IT!
JOHNNY! WE'VE
NO RIGHT TO STOP
HIM IF HE REALLY
WANTS TO LEAVE!
ALL WE CAN DO IS
HOPE THAT HE WILL
DECIDE TO RETURN!

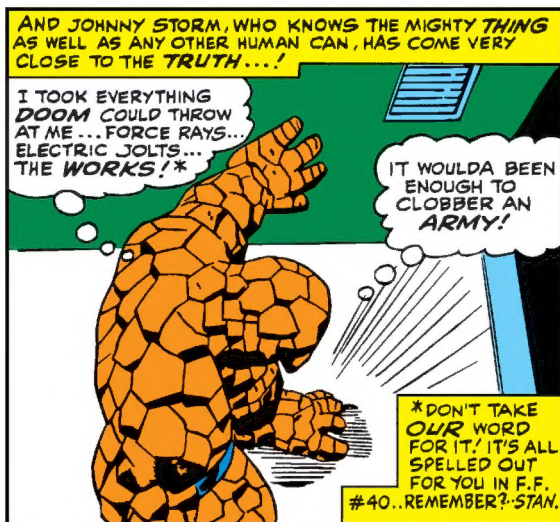
I'LL **NEVER**
BE ABLE TO
STOP HIM
NOW!



BEN, LISTEN! WHERE ARE YOU **GOING?** WHAT'LL YOU
DO? BEN...

IT'S NO USE,
JOHNNY! WE'VE
NO RIGHT TO STOP
HIM IF HE REALLY
WANTS TO LEAVE!
ALL WE CAN DO IS
HOPE THAT HE WILL
DECIDE TO RETURN!

BUT, I NEVER SAW
THAT **LOOK** IN
HIS EYES BEFORE!
A LOOK OF
SORROW...
AND PAIN!

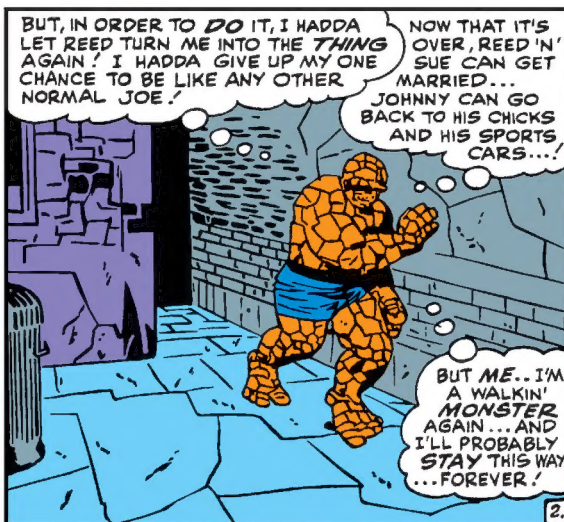


AND JOHNNY STORM, WHO KNOWS THE MIGHTY **THING**
AS WELL AS ANY OTHER HUMAN CAN, HAS COME VERY
CLOSE TO THE **TRUTH...**!

I TOOK EVERYTHING
DOOM COULD THROW
AT ME... FORCE RAYS...
ELECTRIC JOLTS...
THE **WORKS!***

IT WOULD'VE BEEN
ENOUGH TO
CLOBBER AN
ARMY!

*DON'T TAKE
OUR WORD
FOR IT! IT'S ALL
SPELLED OUT
FOR YOU IN F.F.
#40... REMEMBER? STAN.



BUT, IN ORDER TO **DO** IT, I HADDA
LET REED TURN ME INTO THE **THING**
AGAIN! I HADDA GIVE UP MY ONE
CHANCE TO BE LIKE ANY OTHER
NORMAL JOE.

NOW THAT IT'S
OVER, REED 'N'
SUE CAN GET
MARRIED...

JOHNNY CAN GO
BACK TO HIS CHICKS
AND HIS SPORTS
CARS...

BUT ME... I'M
A WALKIN'
MONSTER
AGAIN... AND
I'LL PROBABLY
STAY THIS WAY
...FOREVER!

I'M THROUGH TAKIN' THE PRATT-FALLS WHILE *THEY* GET THE GLORY! LET 'EM FIND *ANOTHER* PATSY FROM NOW ON! I'VE *HAD* IT!

WOTTA PAY-OFF! EVERY MUSCLE IS ACHIN' ME... I CAN HARDLY STAND UP... BUT I'D NEVER LET *THEM* KNOW HOW I'M HURTIN'!! I'LL NEVER LET THEM KNOW *ANYTHING* ANYMORE!

I'M GLAD THERE ARE NO MORE DELIVERIES TO MAKE LEW! I'M TAKIN' THE LITTLE WOMAN BOWLING TONIGHT!

I DUNNO WHERE THIS PICK-UP TRUCK IS HEADED FOR... BUT AS LONG AS IT'S AWAY FROM THE BAXTER BUILDING, IT'S OKAY WITH *ME*! I GOTTA GRAB ME SOME SHUTEYE NOW!

SOME TIME LATER, ON A BUMPY COUNTRY ROAD IN NEW JERSEY, THE SLEEPING *THING* IS JARRED FROM THE BACK OF THE LIGHT TRUCK...

STEP ON IT, WILLYA, LEW!? IF WE'RE LATE, WE'LL NEVER GET AN ALLEY!

AND, THERE IN THE LENGTHENING SHADOWS, A STRANGE POWERFUL, ORANGE-SKINNED FIGURE LIES... HIS TORTURED BODY SO HUNGRY FOR SLEEP THAT EVEN THE JARRING IMPACT OF HIS FALL CANNOT AWAKEN HIM...!

BUT, MINUTES LATER, A SILENT, INVISIBLE *FORCE* LIFTS THE MIGHTY-MUSCLED *THING* AS EFFORTLESSLY AS A FEATHER... GENTLY DRAWING HIM INTO THE AIR...!

UNTIL...

HERE HE COMES!

DON'T MAKE A *SOUND*! THIS IS THE *CRUCIAL* MOMENT!

HE MUST NOT *AWAKEN* UNTIL WE HAVE HIM SAFELY INSIDE!

WHOEVER THE OCCUPANTS OF THAT GLOOMY HOUSE MAY BE, ONE FACT IS CERTAIN... THEY ARE *NOT* THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

MILES AWAY, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE RENTING AGENT OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS **BAXTER BUILDING** LODGES A MOST SEVERE **COMPLAINT** WITH REED RICHARDS...

SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO PAY FOR THE **DAMAGES** DONE TO THIS BUILDING DURING YOUR BATTLE WITH DOCTOR DOOM, RICHARDS!

I UNDERSTAND THAT, MR. CURTIS! BUT YOU MUST REALIZE THAT WE WERE DEFENDING THE CITY AGAINST A TERRIBLE MENACE!

I WOULD THINK THEY'D PAY **US** FOR DEFEATING THAT HORRIBLE CREATURE!

WELL, WE CAN LET OUR **LAWYERS** IRON OUT THE DETAILS, BUT HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED MOVING YOUR HEADQUARTERS TO A **LONELIER** PART OF THE CITY?

NO, BUT IT'S NOT A BAD IDEA! HOWEVER, WE HAVE A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM TO COPE WITH RIGHT NOW!

SO, IF YOU'LL **EXCUSE** US, MR. CURTIS...



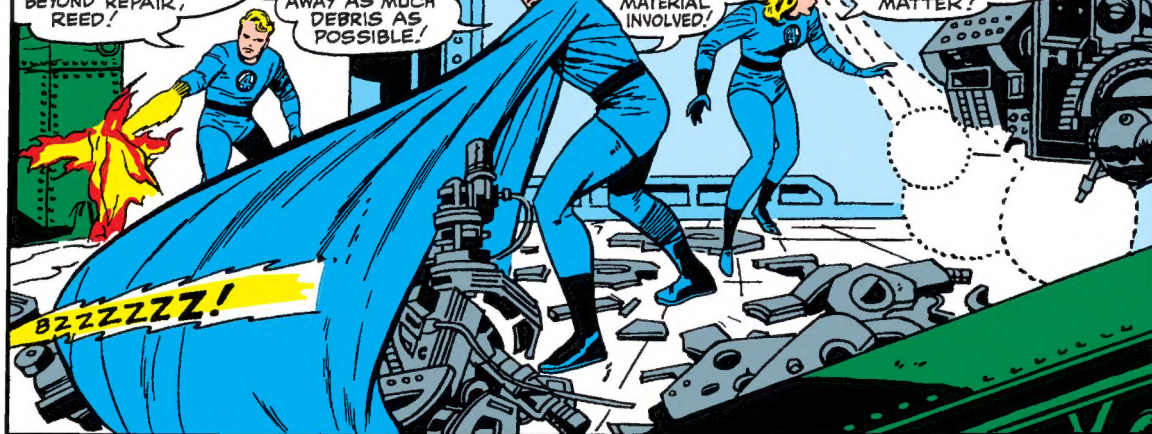
THEN, WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE RENTING AGENT...

I'LL MELT DOWN THE MACHINES WHICH ARE BEYOND REPAIR, REED!

THANKS, JOHNNY! MEANWHILE, I'LL CLEAR AWAY AS MUCH DEBRIS AS POSSIBLE!

TOO BAD WE CAN'T HIRE A CLEANING SERVICE, BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH HUSH-HUSH MATERIAL INVOLVED!

YOU WERE **RIGHT**, DARLING! MY FORCE FIELD MAKES MOVING THIS HEAVY EQUIPMENT A SIMPLE MATTER!



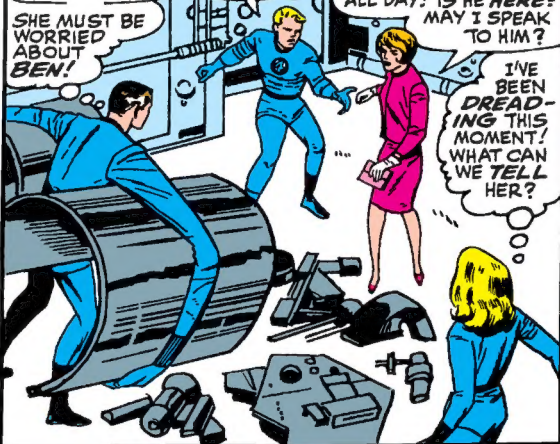
ALICIA! WE DIDN'T **EXPECT** YOU, DEAR!

CAREFUL! THERE'S DEBRIS IN FRONT OF YOU!

I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM **BENJAMIN** ALL DAY! IS HE **HERE**? MAY I SPEAK TO HIM?

SHE MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT **BEN**!

I'VE BEEN **DREADING** THIS MOMENT! WHAT CAN WE TELL HER?

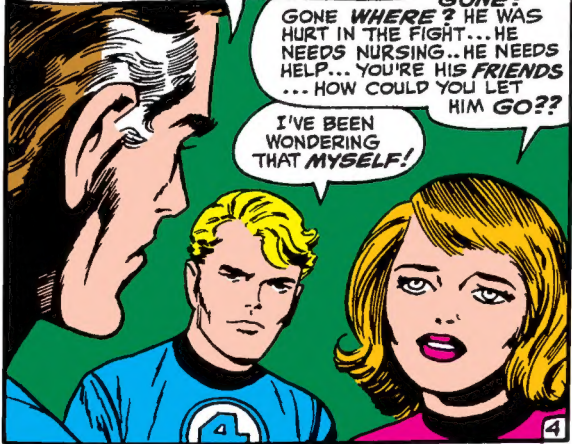


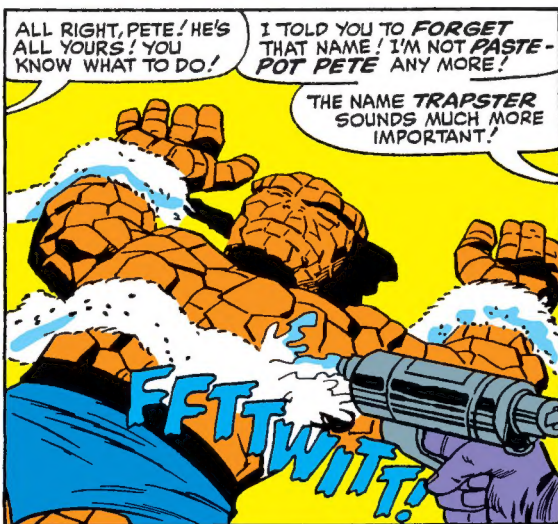
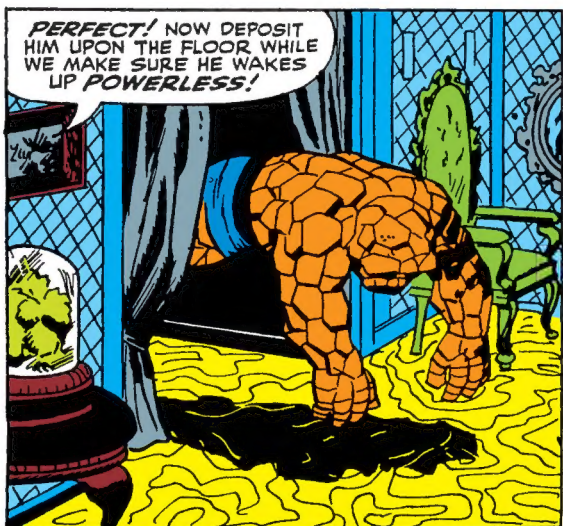
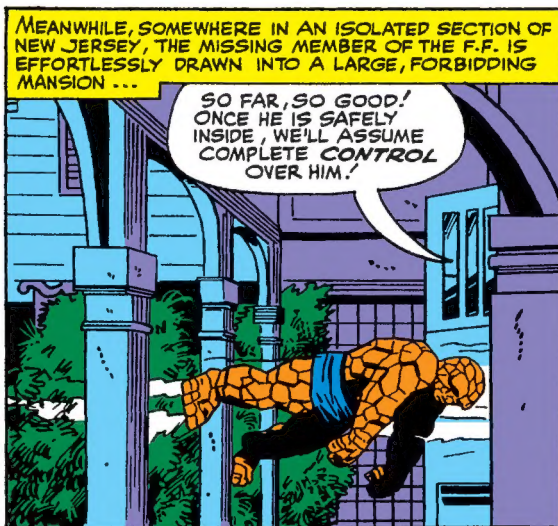
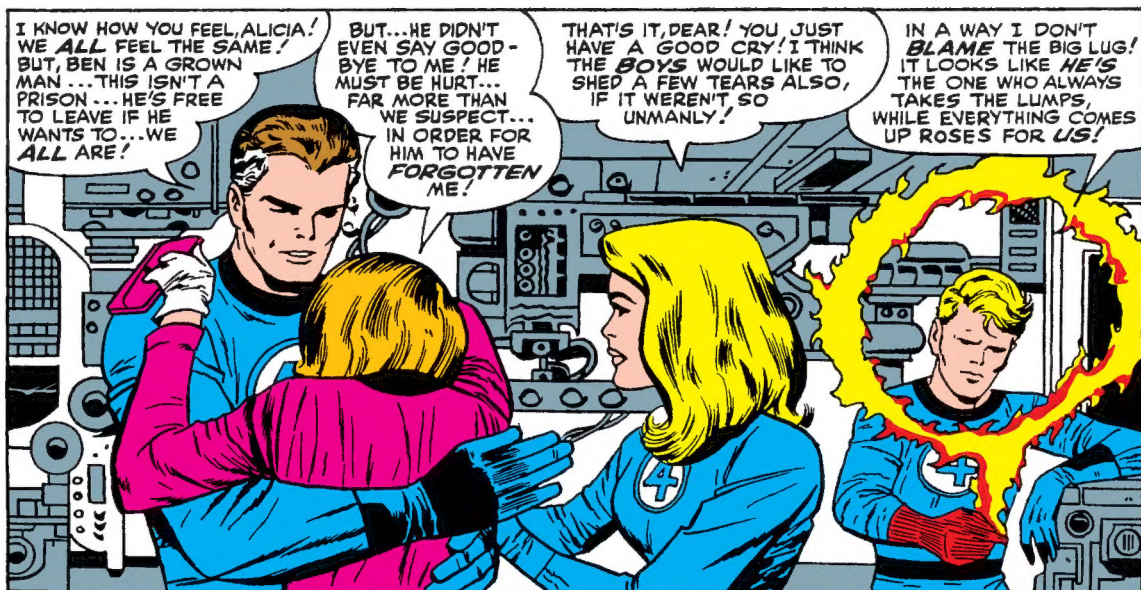
I'LL LEVEL WITH YOU, HONEY! **BEN'S GONE**! HE SAID HE WANTED **OUT**... AND WE COULDN'T STOP HIM! WE HAD NO RIGHT EVEN TO **TRY**!

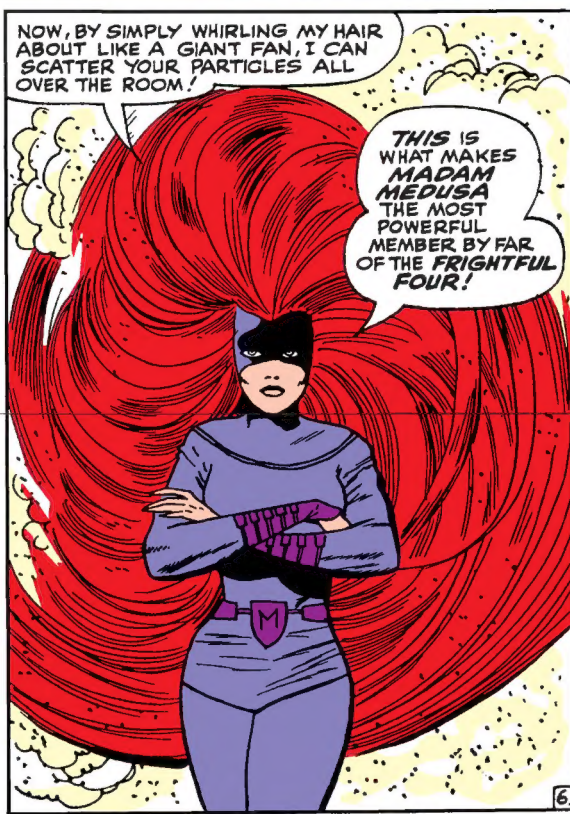
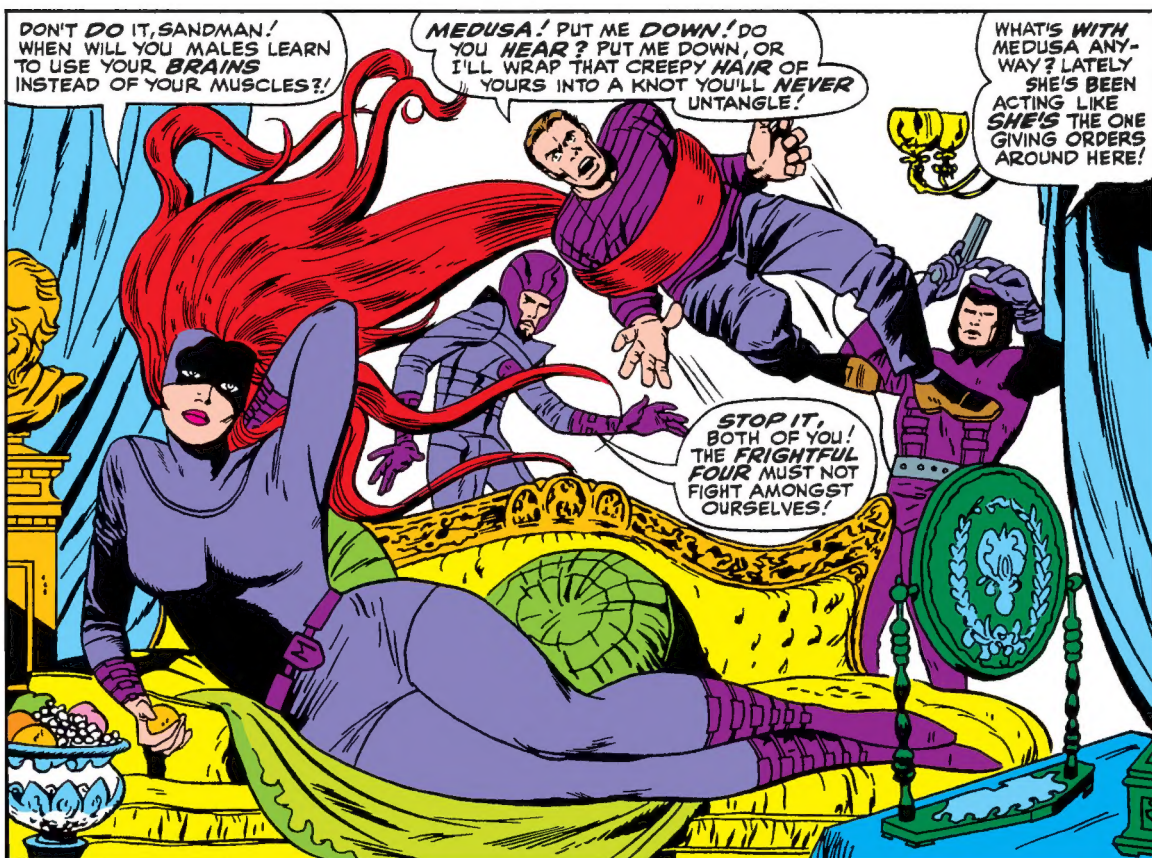
GONE?

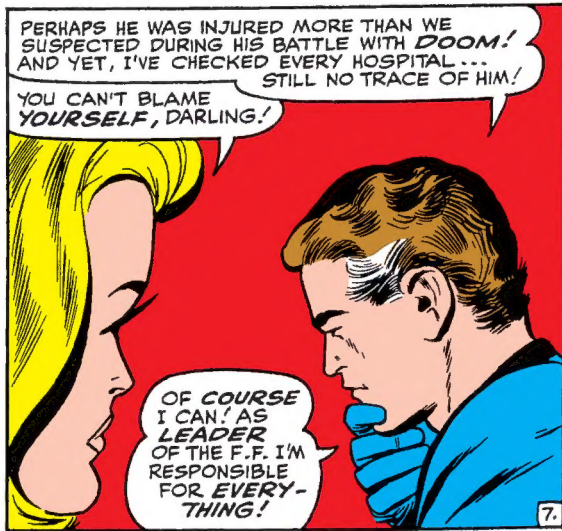
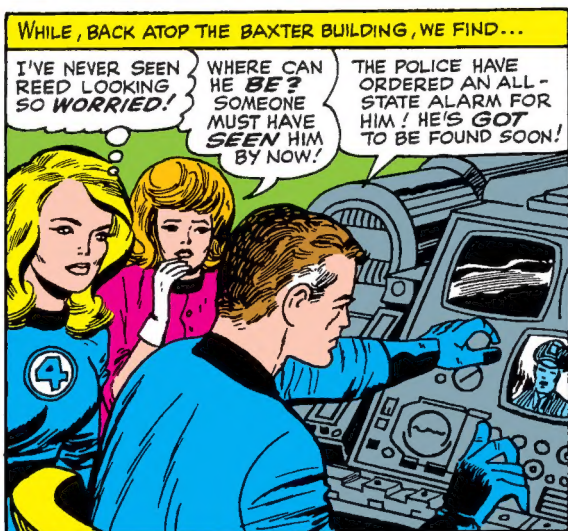
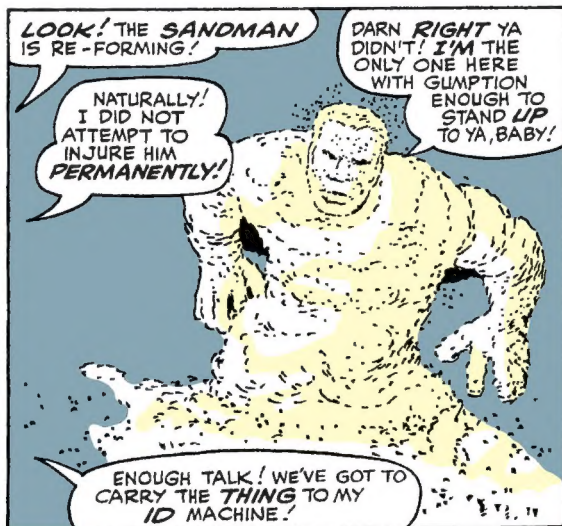
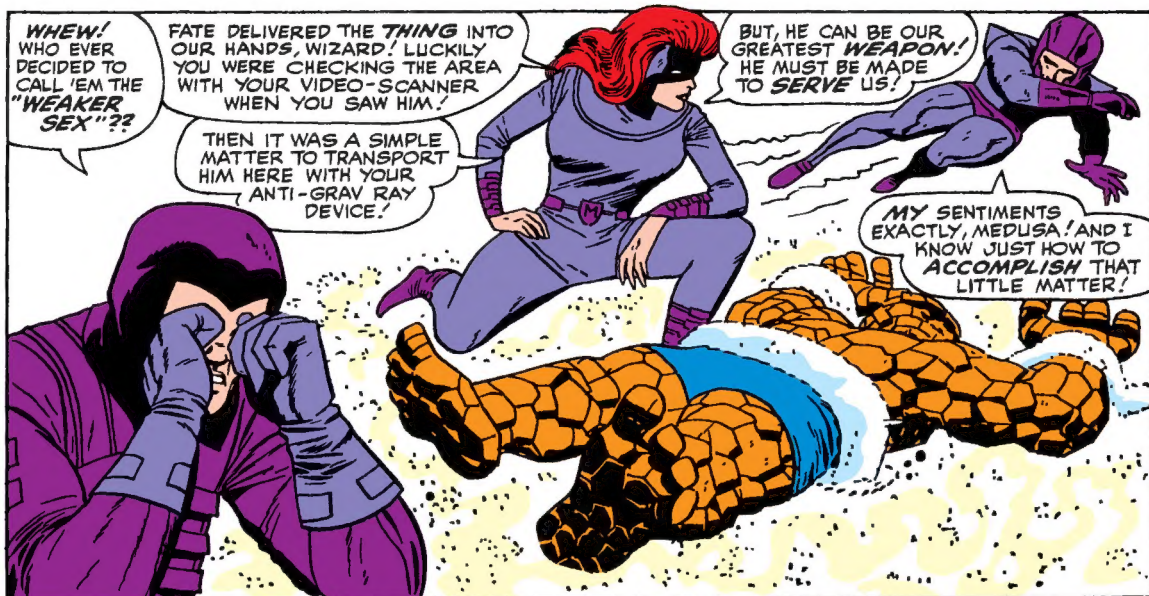
GONE WHERE? HE WAS HURT IN THE FIGHT... HE NEEDS NURSING... HE NEEDS HELP... YOU'RE HIS **FRIENDS**... HOW COULD YOU LET HIM **GO**??

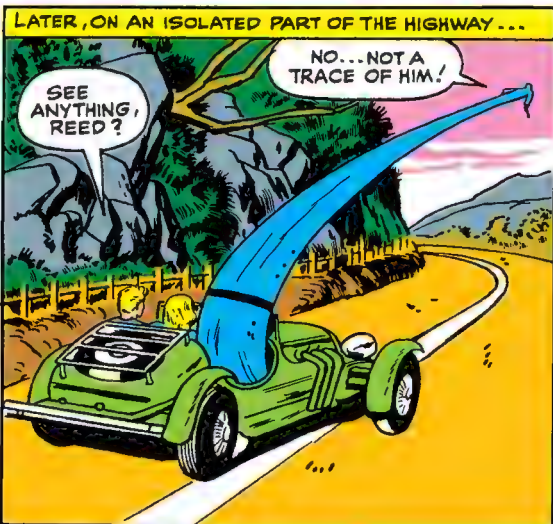
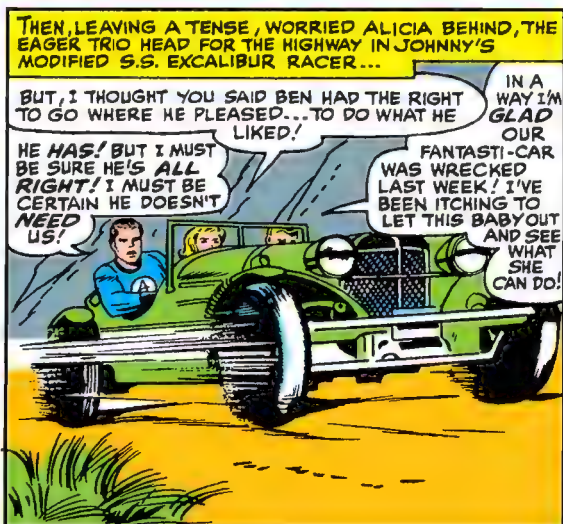
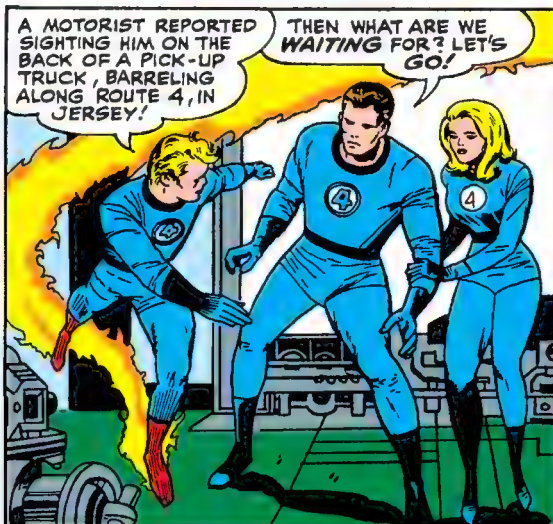
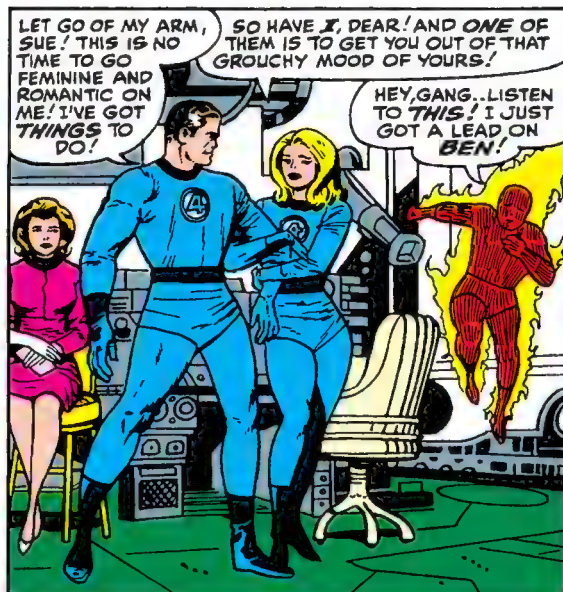
I'VE BEEN WONDERING THAT **MYSELF**!

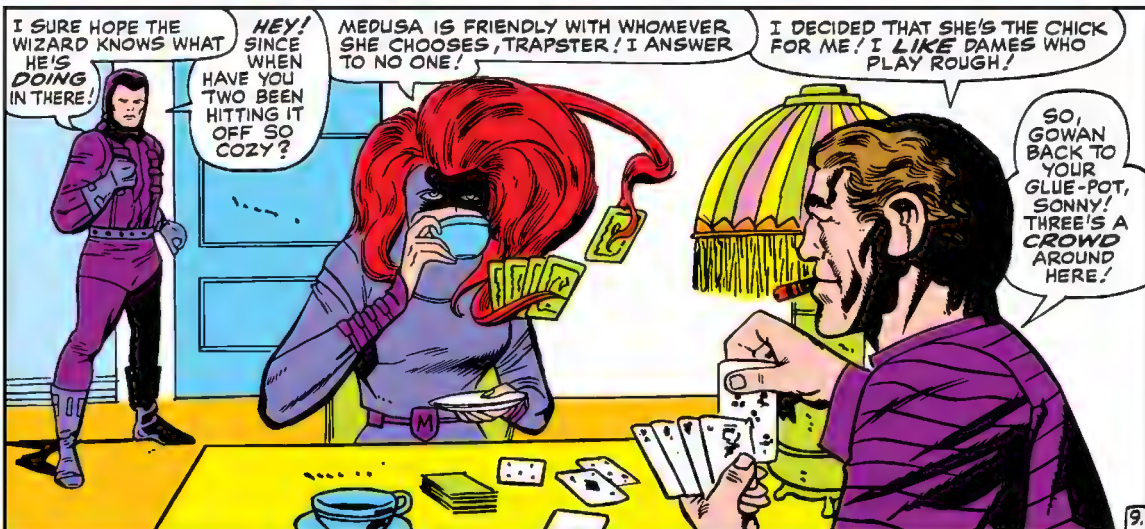
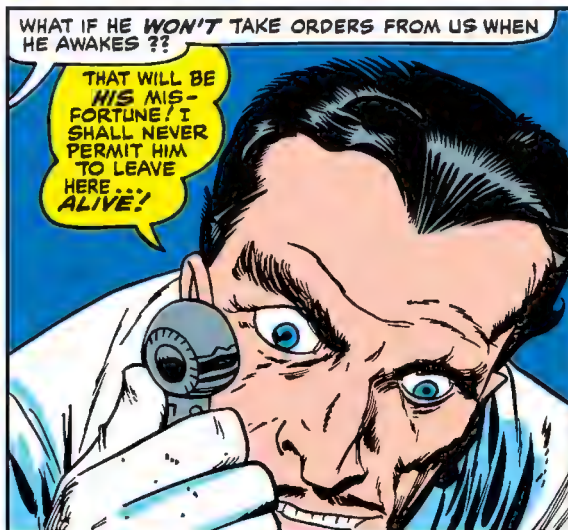
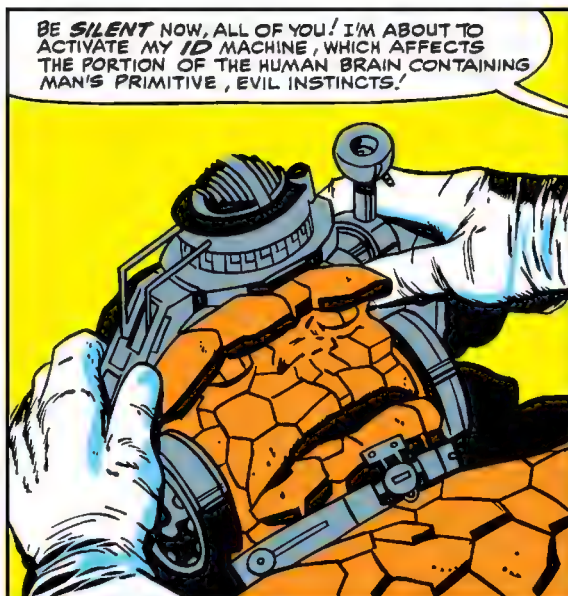
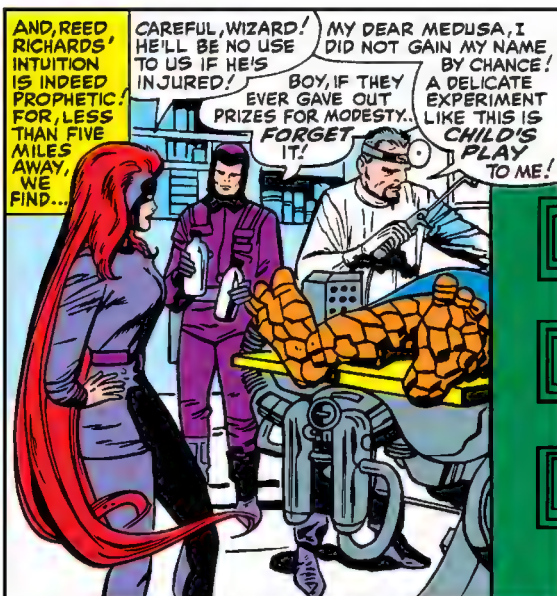


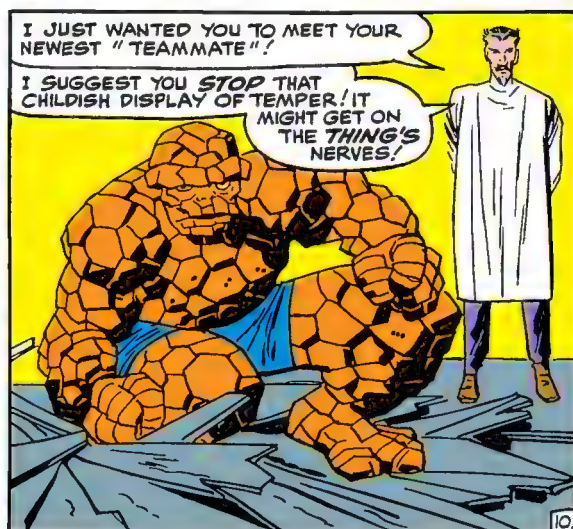
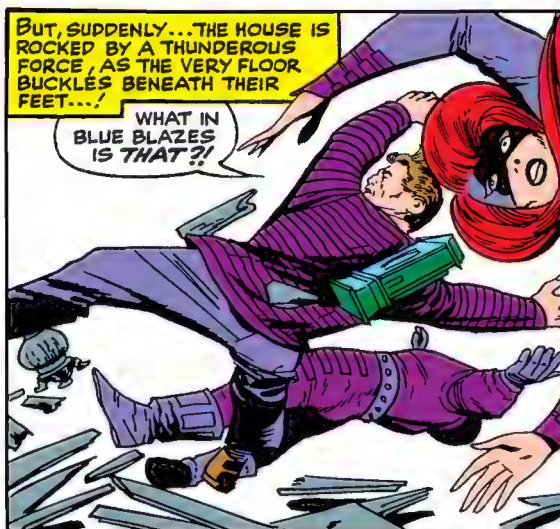
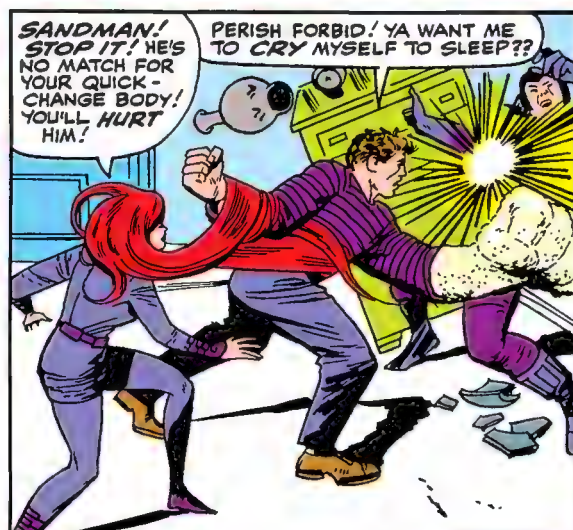


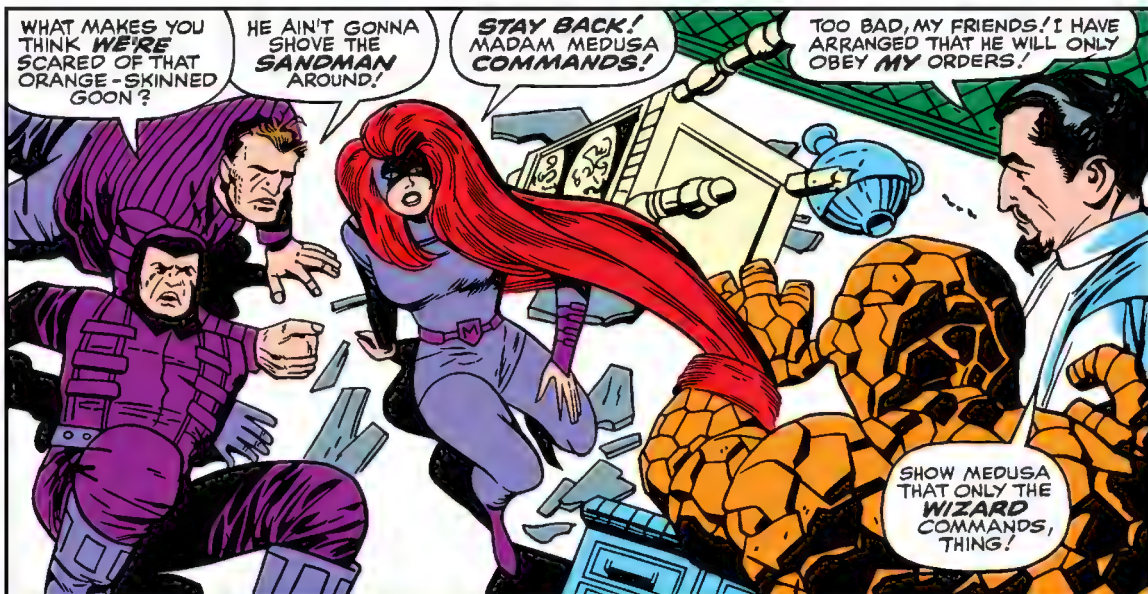




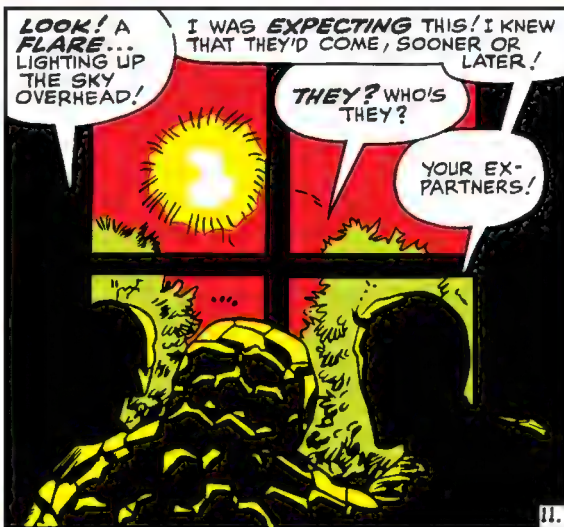
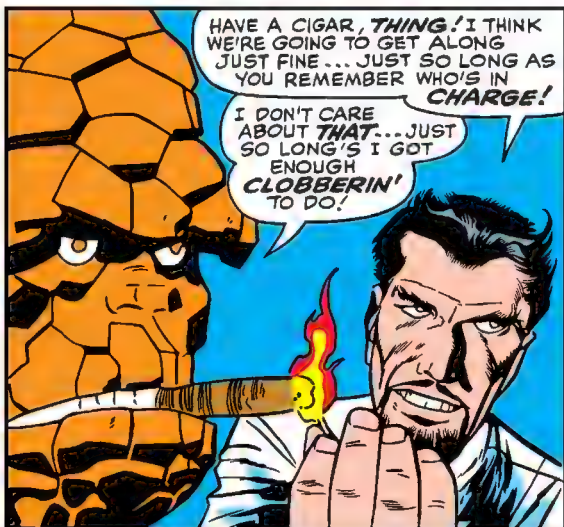
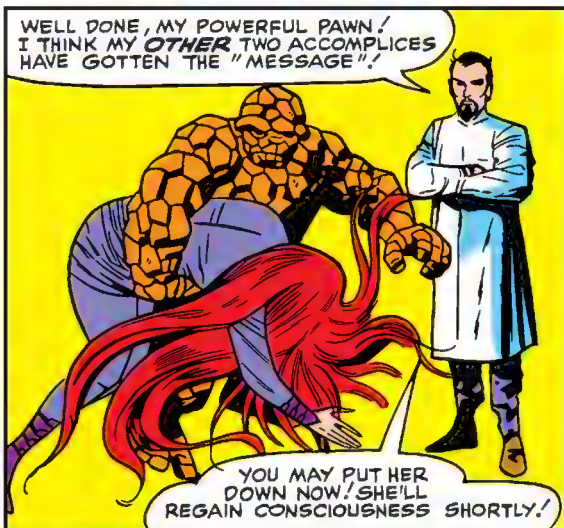
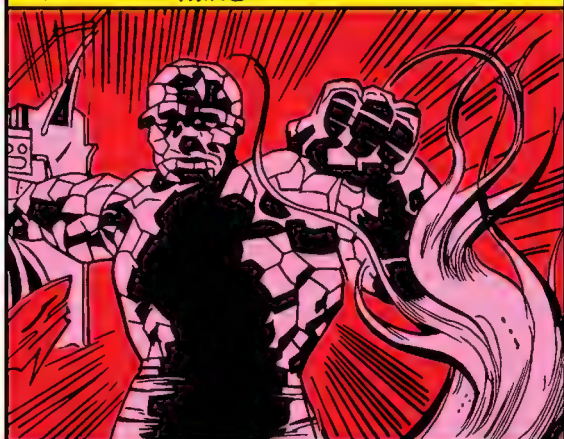


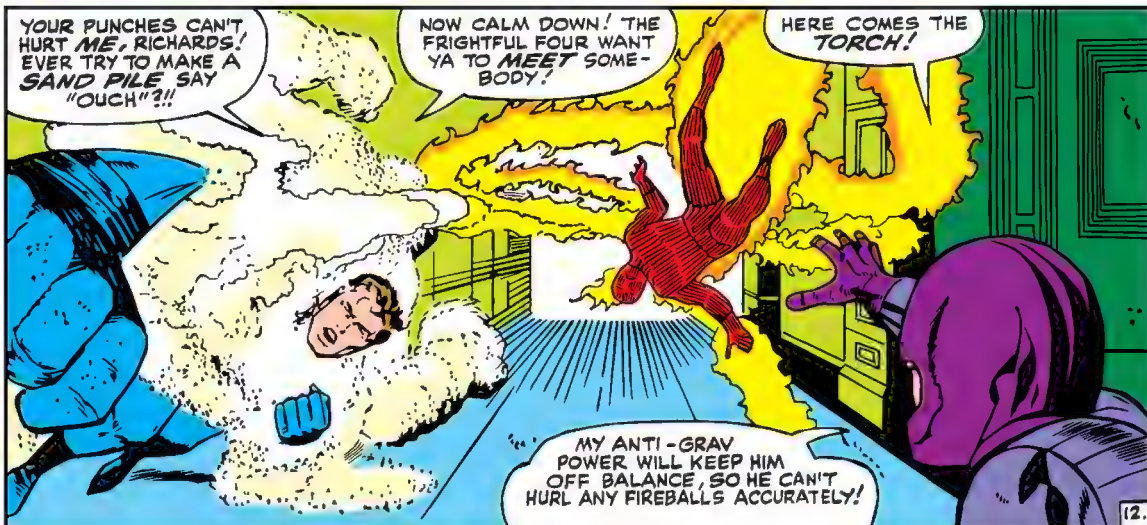
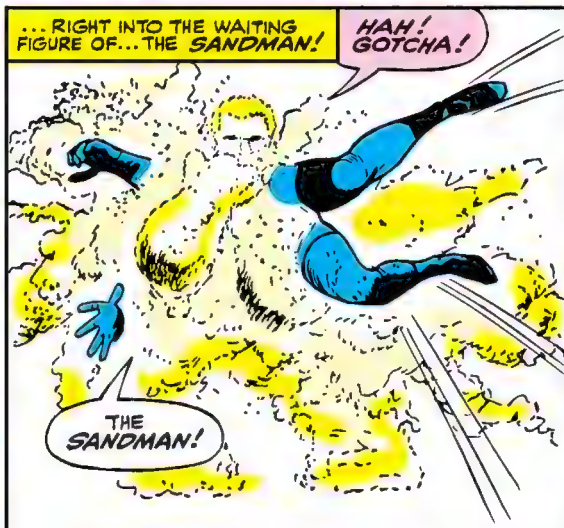
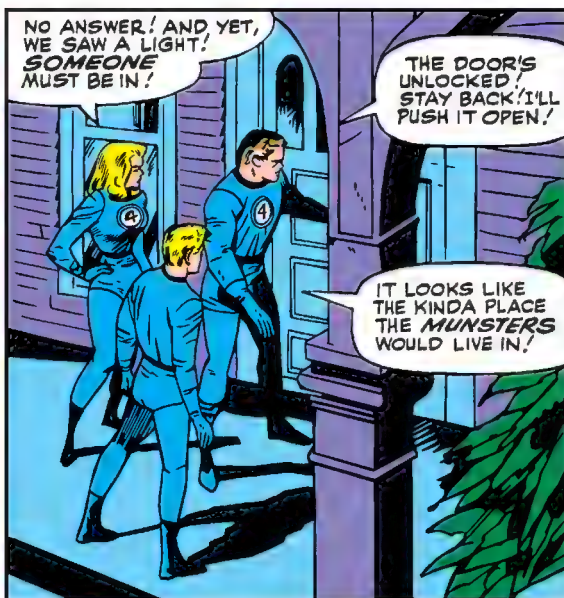


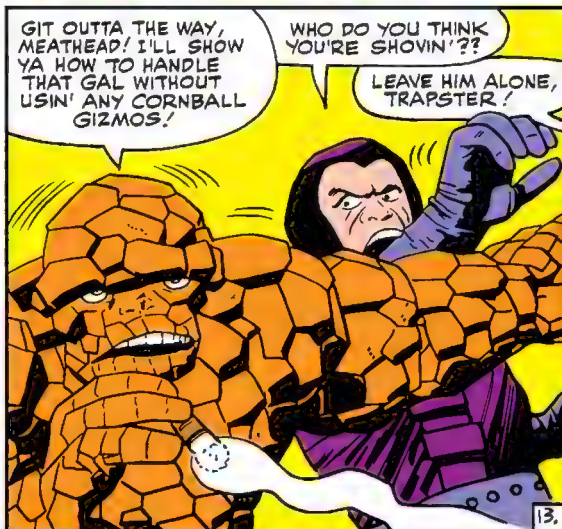
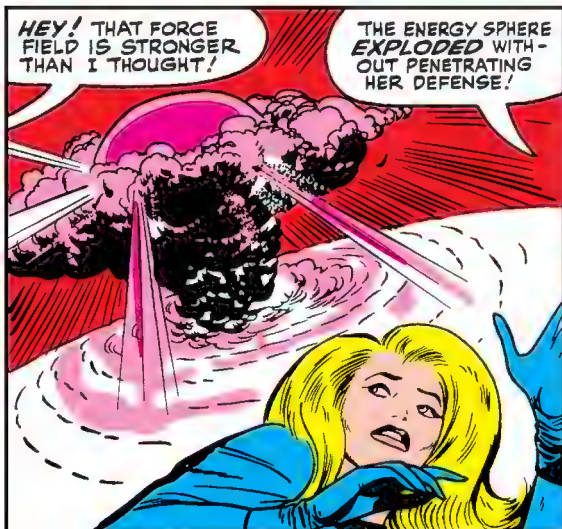
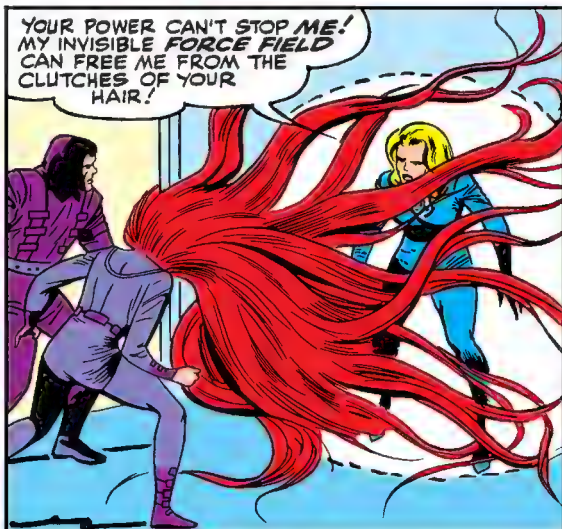
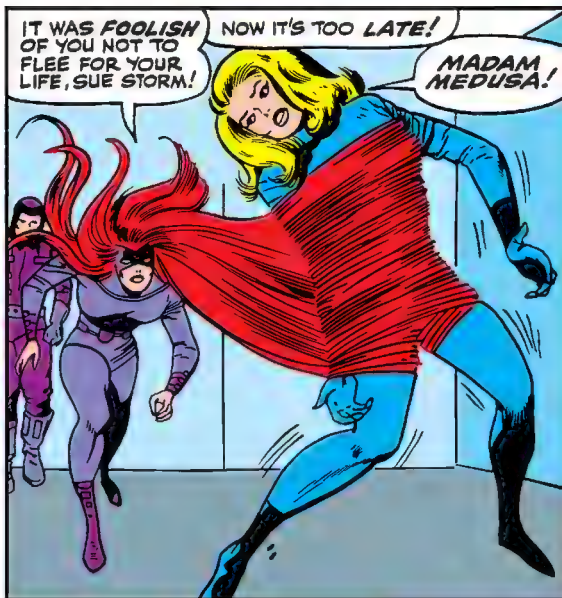
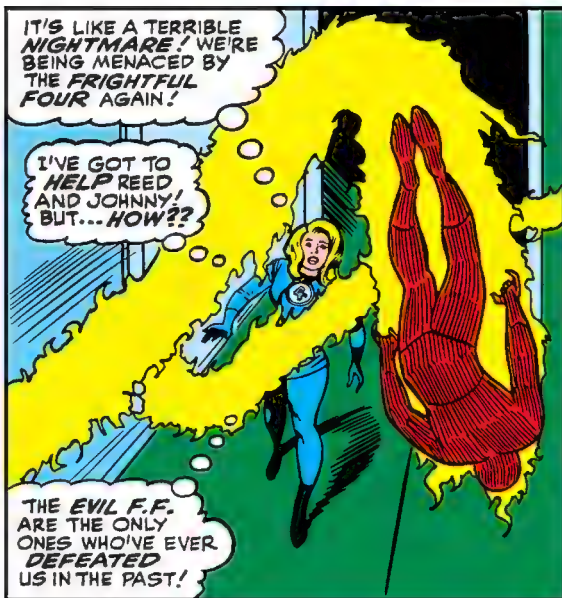


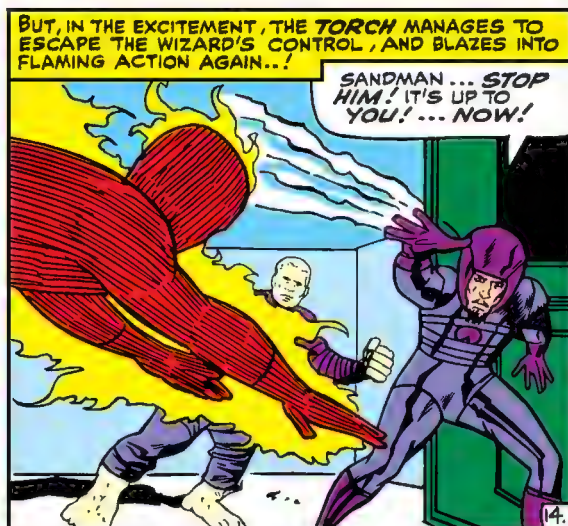
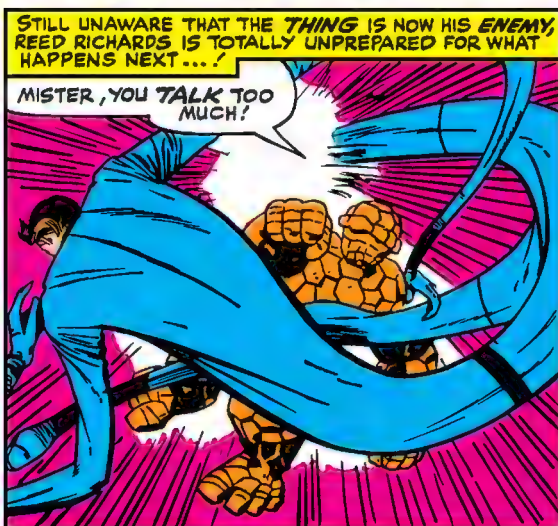
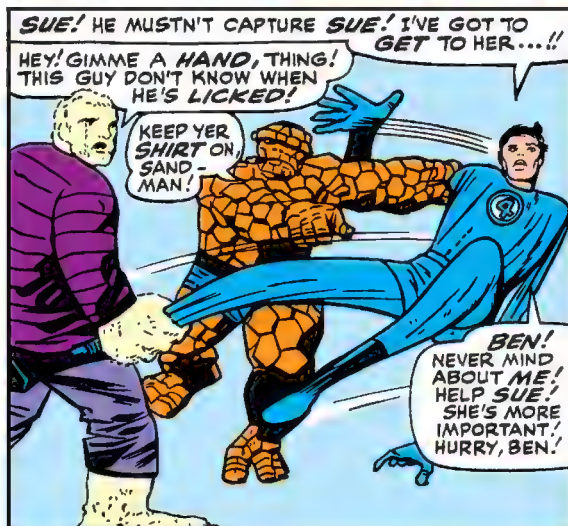
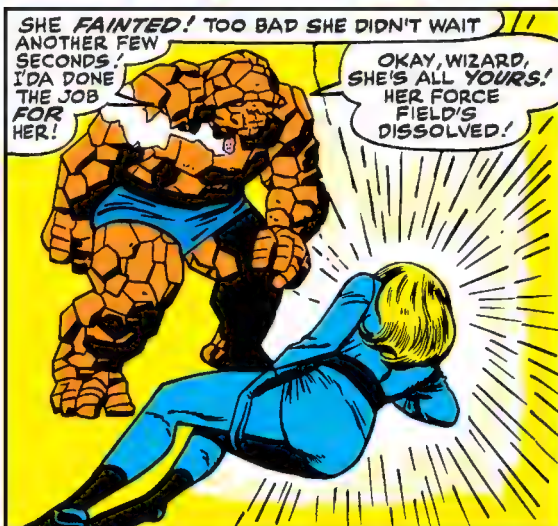
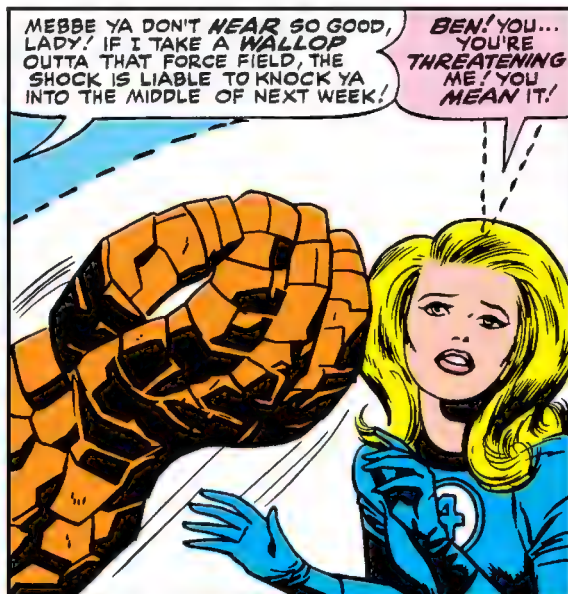
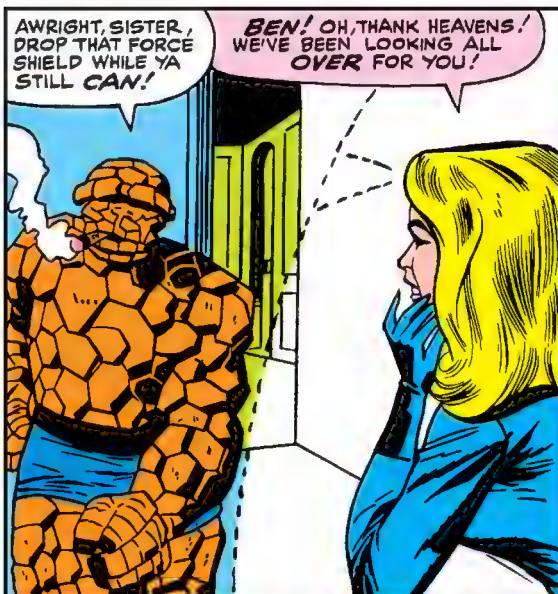


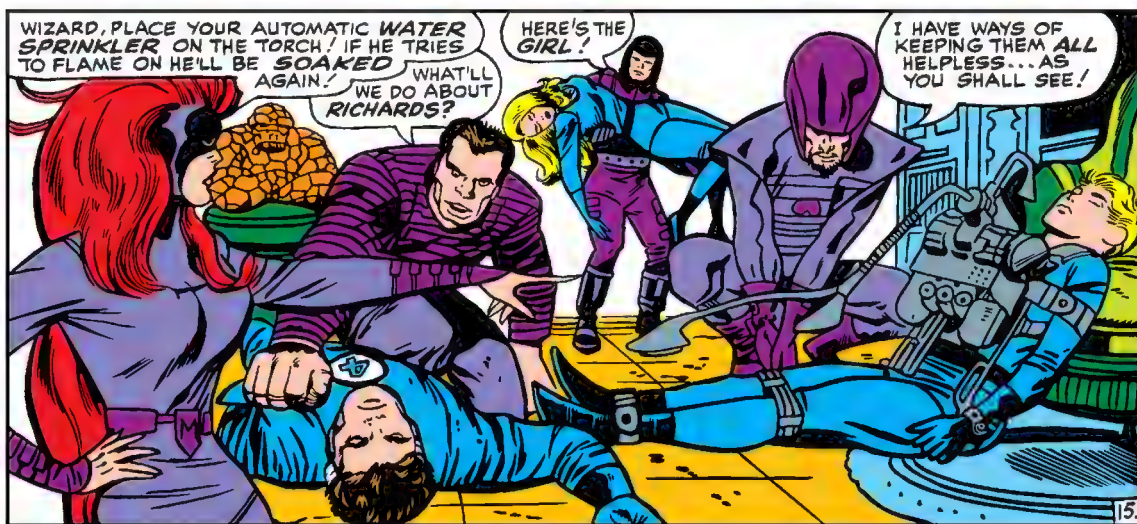
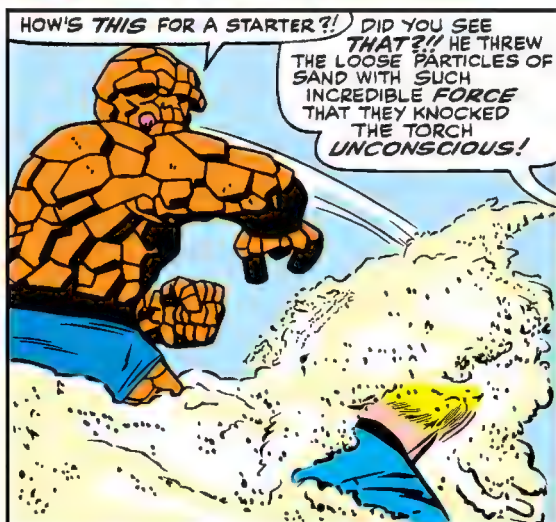
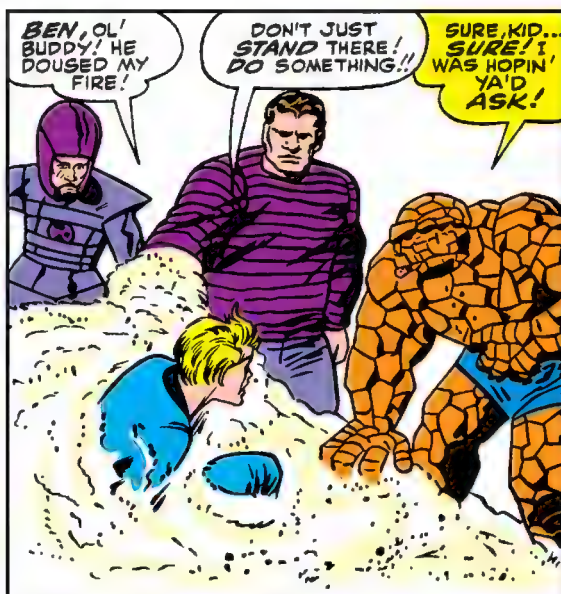
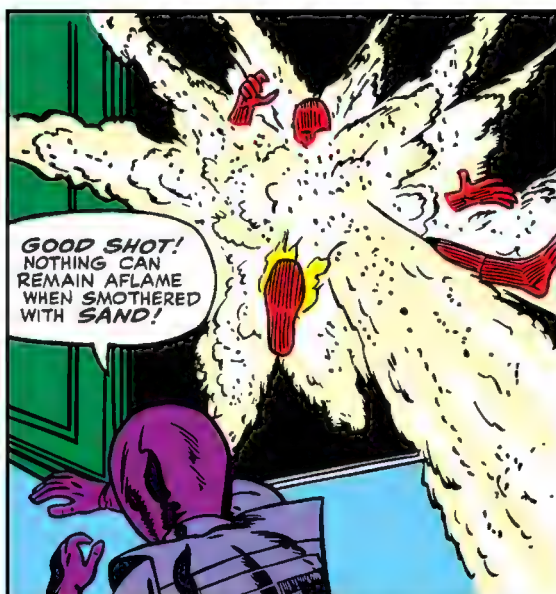
UNHESITATINGLY, A TITANIC HAND SMASHES THROUGH THE WALL, RIPPING INTO THE LIVE ELECTRICAL WIRES, AS A BLINDING BLAST OF CURRENT SURGES THROUGH THE **THING** AND INTO MEDUSA'S HAIR...!

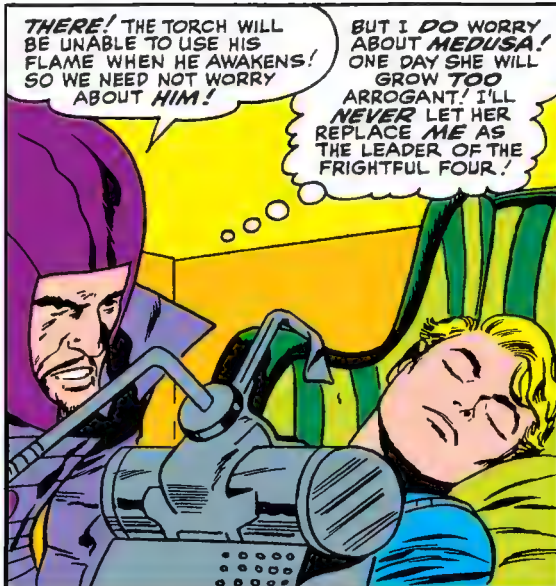






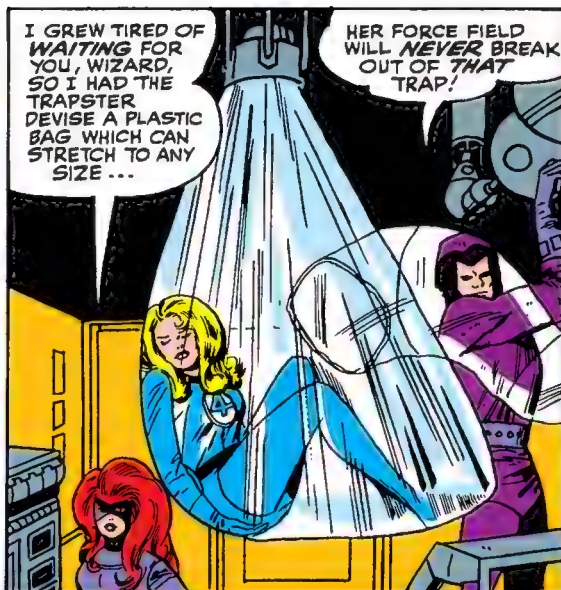






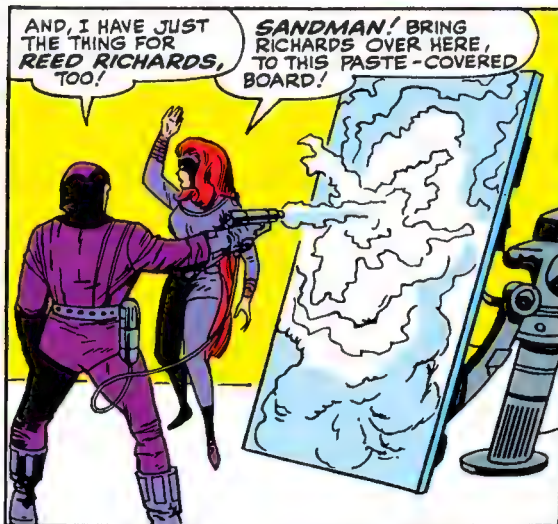
THERE! THE TORCH WILL BE UNABLE TO USE HIS FLAME WHEN HE AWAKENS! SO WE NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT HIM!

BUT I DO WORRY ABOUT MEDUSA! ONE DAY SHE WILL GROW TOO ARROGANT! I'LL NEVER LET HER REPLACE ME AS THE LEADER OF THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR!



I GREW TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU, WIZARD, SO I HAD THE TRAPSTER DEVISE A PLASTIC BAG WHICH CAN STRETCH TO ANY SIZE...

HER FORCE FIELD WILL NEVER BREAK OUT OF THAT TRAP!



AND, I HAVE JUST THE THING FOR REED RICHARDS, TOO!

SANDMAN! BRING RICHARDS OVER HERE, TO THIS PASTE-COVERED BOARD!



I GET THE ANGLE! WHEN HE WAKES UP, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO STRETCH HIMSELF FREE OF THE PASTE, HUH?

EXACTLY! AND NOW, WIZARD, WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY?



SHE'S TRYIN' TO PUSH HER WEIGHT AROUND! SHE'S ACTIN' LIKE SHE'S THE BOSS! WANT ME TO CHANGE HER MIND, WIZARD?

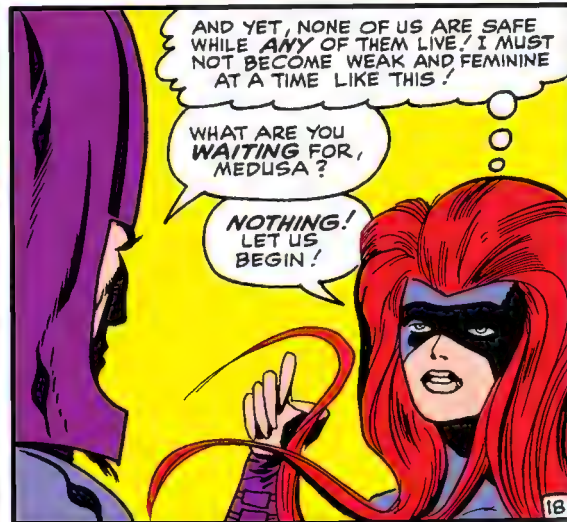
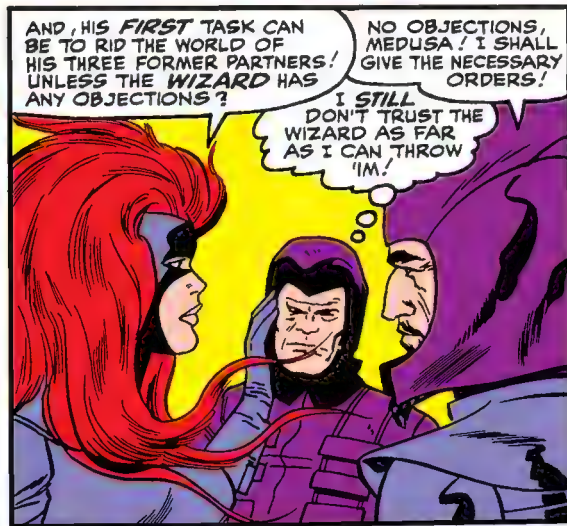
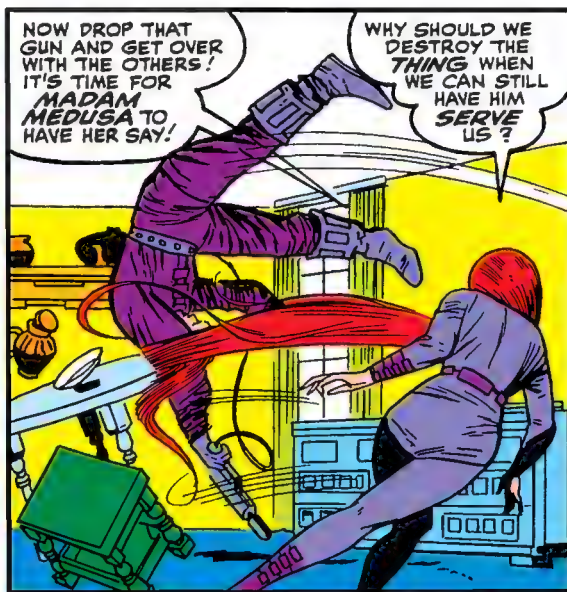
NOT YET, THING! NOT UNTIL IT SUITS MY PLANS! JUST BE SURE YOU DON'T SLEEP ON THE JOB!

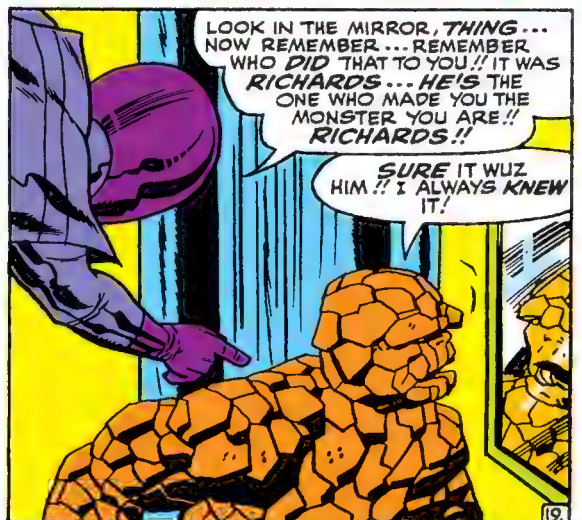
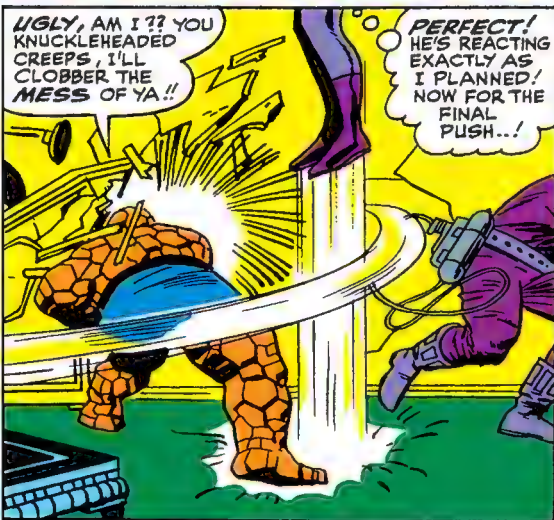
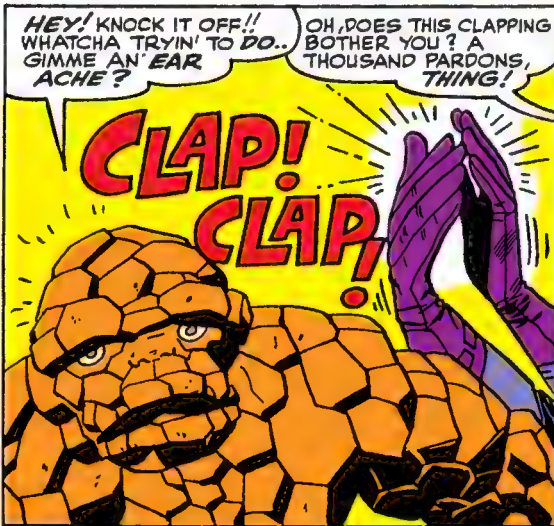
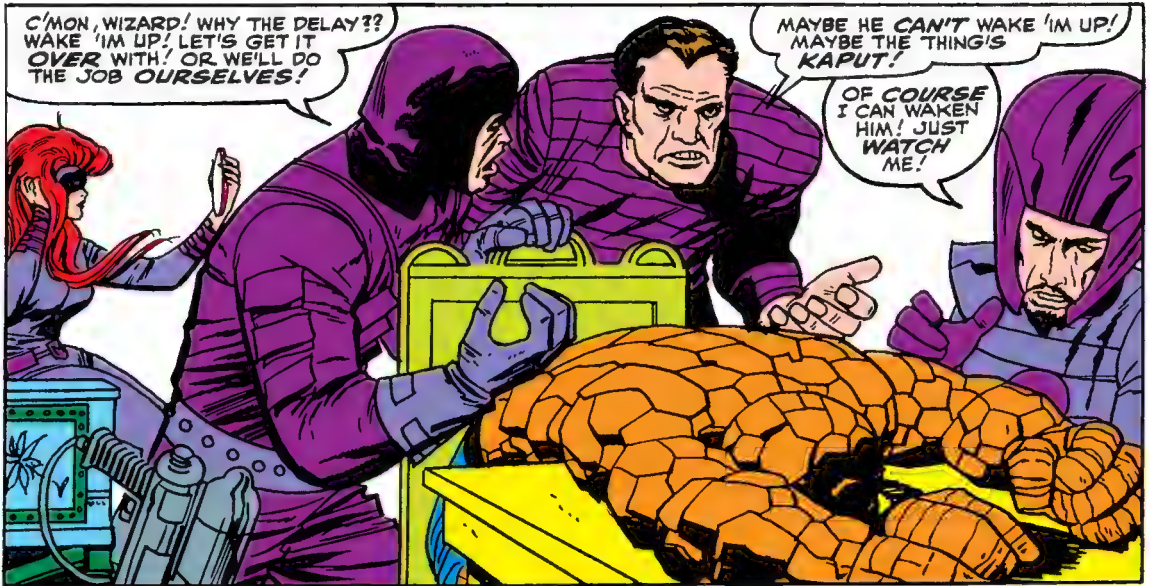


HAH! IT WORKED! THE WORD SLEEP IS MY POST-HYPNOTIC CONTROL OVER YOU!

EVERY TIME I SAY IT, YOU WILL GO INTO A DEEP TRANCE UNTIL I AWAKEN YOU!









HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO BECOME BEN GRIMM AGAIN! HE HATES YOU! HE'S JEALOUS OF YOU!

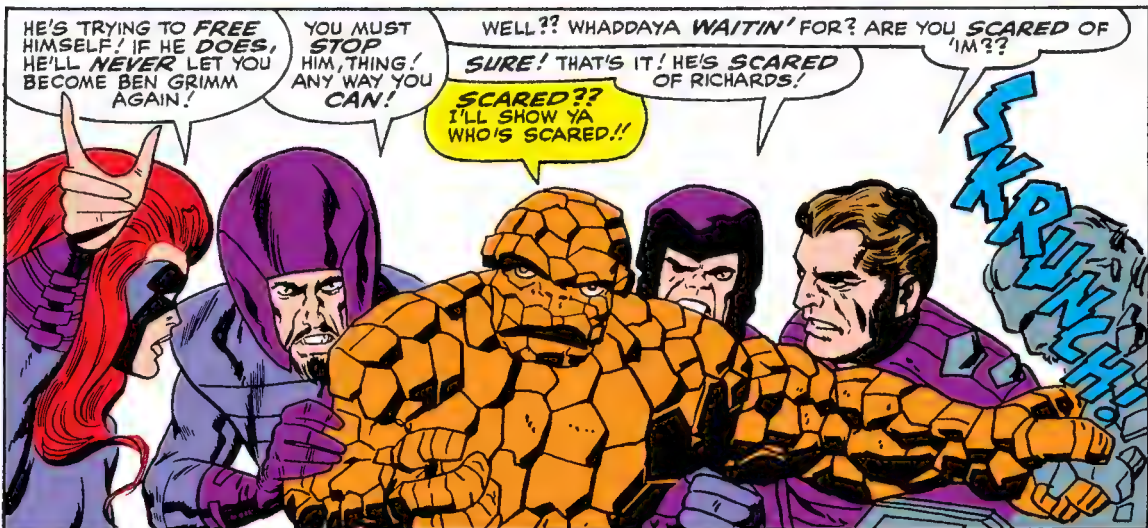
HE'S THE WORST ENEMY YOU HAVE IN THE WORLD!

YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! HE'S MY ENEMY!



BEN! DON'T LISTEN TO THEM! THEY'VE GOT YOU IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE! THEY'RE TRYING TO BRAINWASH YOU! DON'T LET THEM DO IT, BEN!

DO YOU HEAR HIM? HE'S TRYING TO SAVE HIMSELF! TRYING TO DENY HIS GUILT! BUT YOU WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT! NOT SINCE WE OPENED YOUR EYES!



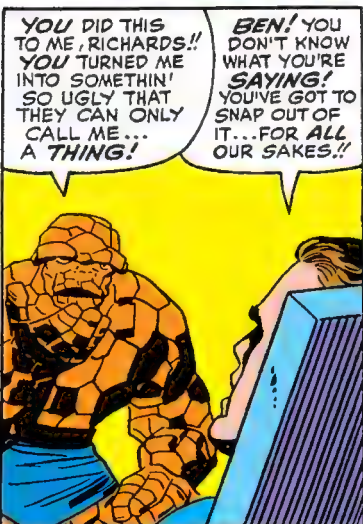
HE'S TRYING TO FREE HIMSELF! IF HE DOES, HE'LL NEVER LET YOU BECOME BEN GRIMM AGAIN!

YOU MUST STOP HIM, THING! ANY WAY YOU CAN!

WELL?? WHADDAYA WAITIN' FOR? ARE YOU SCARED OF 'IM??

SURE! THAT'S IT! HE'S SCARED OF RICHARDS!

SCARED?? I'LL SHOW YA WHO'S SCARED!!

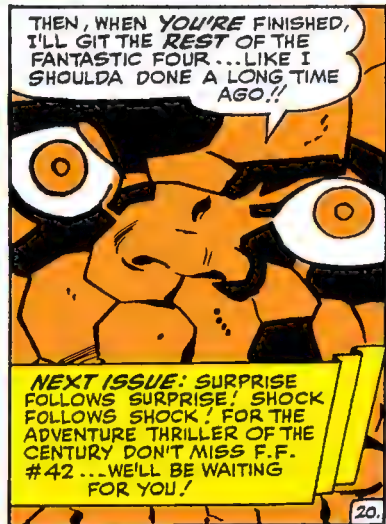


YOU DID THIS TO ME, RICHARDS!! YOU TURNED ME INTO SOMETHIN' SO UGLY THAT THEY CAN ONLY CALL ME... A THING!

BEN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! YOU'VE GOT TO SNAP OUT OF IT...FOR ALL OUR SAKES!!



SHUDDUP, RICHARDS! I AIN'T LISTENIN' TO YA! I'M GONNA CHANGE YOU NOW, HEAR?? I'LL DO TO YOU WHAT YOU DID TO ME! AN' NOTHIN' CAN STOP ME!



THEN, WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, I'LL GIT THE REST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...LIKE I SHOULDA DONE A LONG TIME AGO!!

NEXT ISSUE: SURPRISE FOLLOWS SURPRISE! SHOCK FOLLOWS SHOCK! FOR THE ADVENTURE THRILLER OF THE CENTURY DON'T MISS F.F. #42...WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU!



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"TO SAVE YOU, WHY
MUST I KILL YOU?"

THE BATTLE
YOU NEVER
EXPECTED
TO SEE!



THE FABULOUS **F.F.** MUST FIGHT AS NEVER BEFORE!

"TO SAVE YOU, WHY MUST I KILL YOU?"

UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE WIZARD'S DIABOLICAL ID MACHINE, THE MIGHTY **THING** BELIEVES THE FANTASTIC FOUR TO BE HIS ENEMIES! THUS, HE OBEYS THE COMMAND WHICH WILL BRING DEATH TO HIS HELPLESS EX-PARTNERS....!

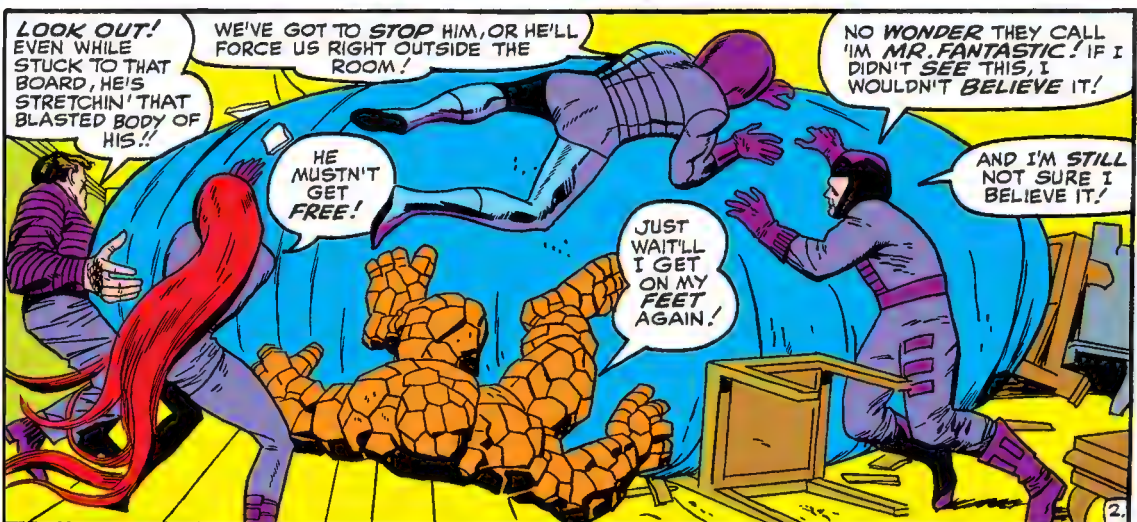
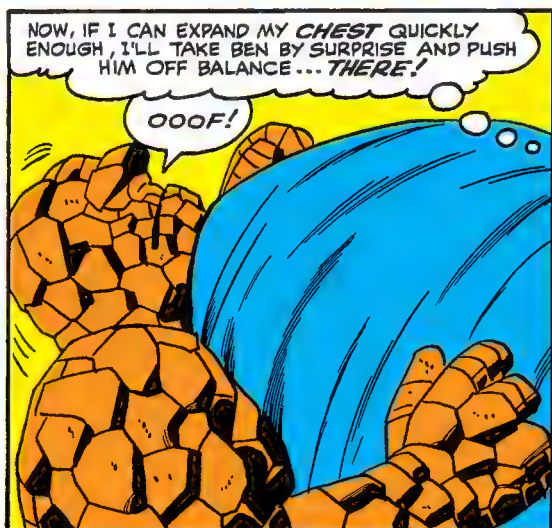
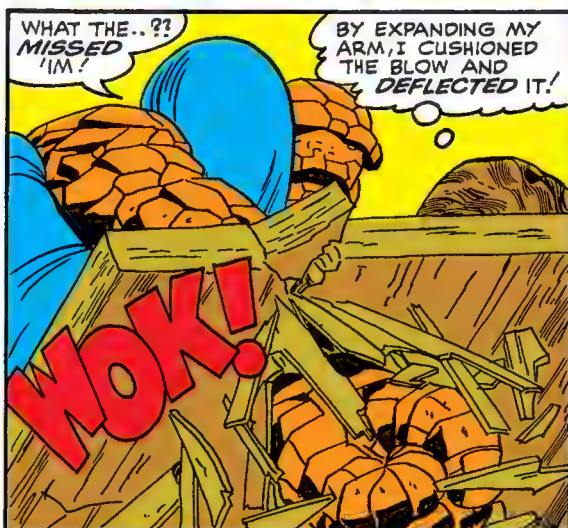
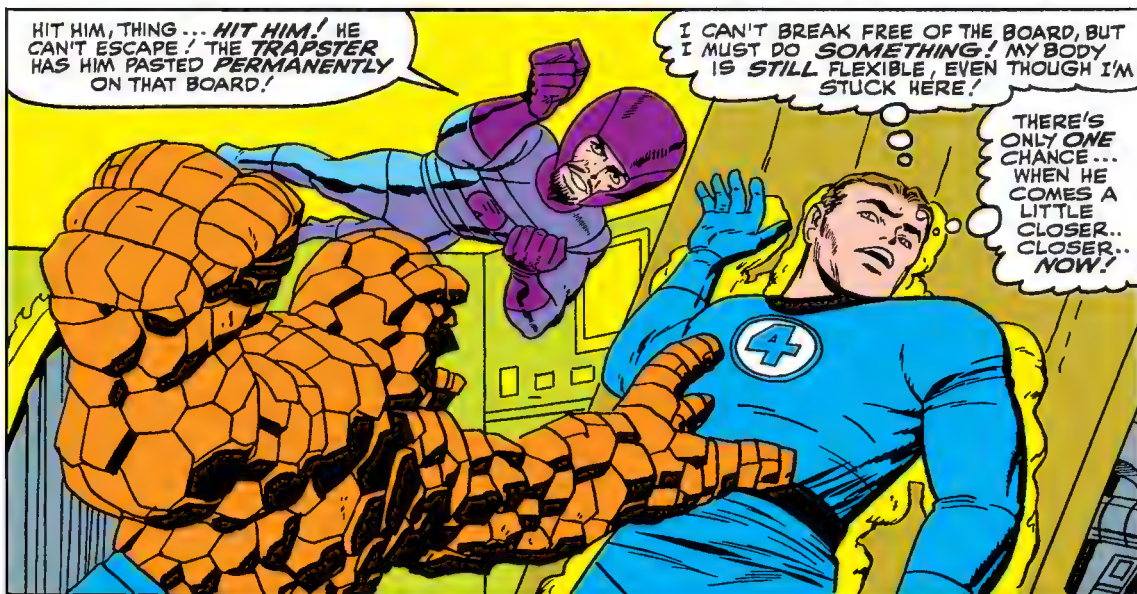
RICHARDS SHALL BE OUR FIRST VICTIM! HE'S HELPLESS, THING! NOW DESTROY HIM!

REMEMBER, HE MADE YOU THE UGLY BRUTE YOU ARE! THIS IS YOUR CHANCE FOR REVENGE!

NOTHING CAN SAVE THE F.F. NOW!



Produced By: **STAN LEE** and **JACK KIRBY**
Inking: **V. COLLETTA** Lettering: **S. ROSEN**



MEANWHILE, THE **TORCH** RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS IN ANOTHER ROOM, ONLY TO FIND THAT A PORTABLE WATER SPRINKLER IS STRAPPED TO HIS CHEST!

THE ONLY WAY I CAN HELP THE OTHERS IS BY **FLAMING ON!** BUT, IF I DO, MY FLAME WILL BE DOUSED BY A SHOWER OF WATER!

UNLESS...!

IF I CAN FLAME ON **QUICKLY** ENOUGH... **HOT** ENOUGH... I MIGHT MELT THE SHOWER APPARATUS BEFORE THE WATER SOAKS ME! I'VE GOT TO CHANCE IT!

I CAN'T LEAVE SUE AND REED AT THE MERCY OF A **MADDENED** THING!

AND SO...

FLAME ON!

IT WORKED!
I DID IT!

NOW I'VE GOT TO FIND THE **OTHERS!** I PRAY I'M NOT TOO LATE!

IF THE **THING** IS STILL UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE **FRIGHTFUL FOUR**, THEN ANYTHING IS LIABLE TO HAPPEN!

JOHNNY!! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE **FREE!** I THOUGHT IT WAS **HOPELESS!**

SUE! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?

MY FORCE FIELD HAS NO EFFECT AGAINST THIS **CHEMICALLY-TREATED PLASTIC BAG**

I CAN'T BREAK OUT!

I READ YOU, GAL! BUT NO **PLASTIC SACK** IS GONNA KEEP MY SISTER A PRISONER!

YOU DID IT!!!
I'M **FREE!**

MEANTIME, REED RICHARDS CONTINUES HIS DESPERATE EFFORT TO KEEP THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR AT BAY... STRAINING AND STRETCHING HIS INCALCULABLY SUPPLE BODY TO ITS UTMOST! AND THEN ...

HANG ON, REED! WE'RE COMING!

THING!! DON'T JUST STAND THERE... DO SOMETHING!

HUH? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

ALTHOUGH THE MIGHTY, ORANGE-SKINNED GOLIATH COULD NORMALLY STOP REED'S EXPANSION WITH ONE BLOW, THE EFFECTS OF THE ID MACHINE HAVE DULLED HIS SENSES AND HIS FIGHTING ABILITY! ... STAN.

HOW ABOUT FIGHTING SOMEONE WHO *ISN'T* STUCK TO A BOARD NOW??

CAREFUL, JOHNNY! THEY'RE STILL DEADLY AS EVER!

WRONG, LADY! WE'RE EVEN DEADLIER!

RATS! HE WAS TOO FAST! I MISSED 'IM!

THWUPP!

I'LL STOP HIM... SOON AS I GET THIS FUNNEL ON MY PASTE GUN!

SANDMAN! KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ME!

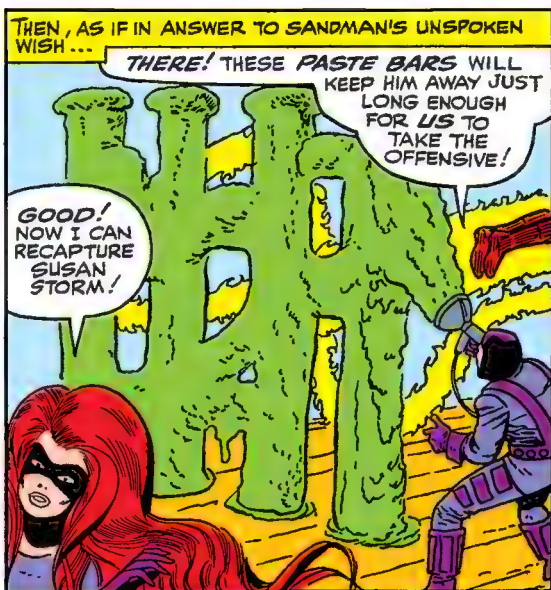
I'LL GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE TO SURRENDER ... BEFORE I REALLY GET ROUGH!

YOU DON'T SCARE US, TORCH! NOT WHILE I CAN STILL TURN MY BODY TO SAND!



JUST HOLD THAT POSE, BIG-MOUTH! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK TO MAKE YOU **EAT** THOSE WORDS!

MISSED AGAIN! IF ONLY SOMETHING WOULD SLOW HIM DOWN!!



THEN, AS IF IN ANSWER TO SANDMAN'S UNSPOKEN WISH...

THERE! THESE **PASTE BARS** WILL KEEP HIM AWAY JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR **US** TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE!

GOOD! NOW I CAN RECAPTURE SUSAN STORM!



NOT **THIS** TIME, YOU LONG-HAIRED WITCH! YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME BY **SURPRISE** NOW!

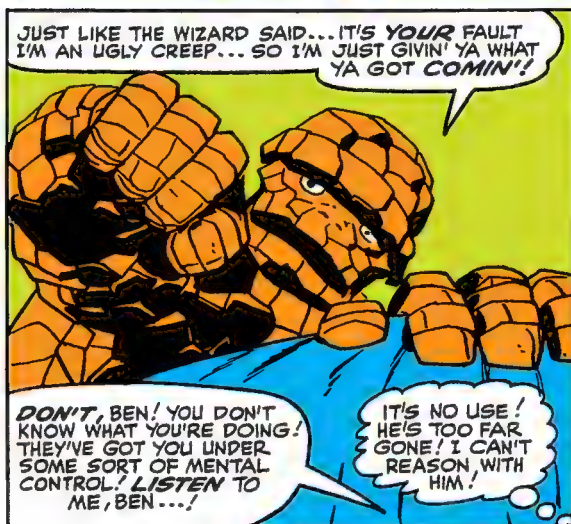
WHAT DOES **THAT** MATTER! YOUR PUNY POWERS ARE NO MATCH FOR MY INVINCIBLE **SCARLET TRESSES!**



AND, WHILE THE OTHERS ARE THUS OCCUPIED, THE **THING**, STILL UNDER THE WIZARD'S CONTROL, FINALLY DECIDES ON A COURSE OF ACTION...!

NO MATTER **HOW** FAR HE STRETCHES HIS BODY.. A GOOD **PUNCH** CAN HURT 'IM AS MUCH AS EVER!

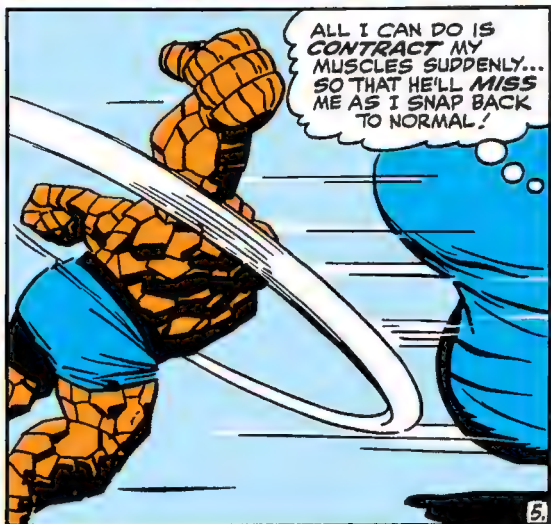
AND THAT'S **ALL** IT'S GONNA TAKE... JUST **ONE!**



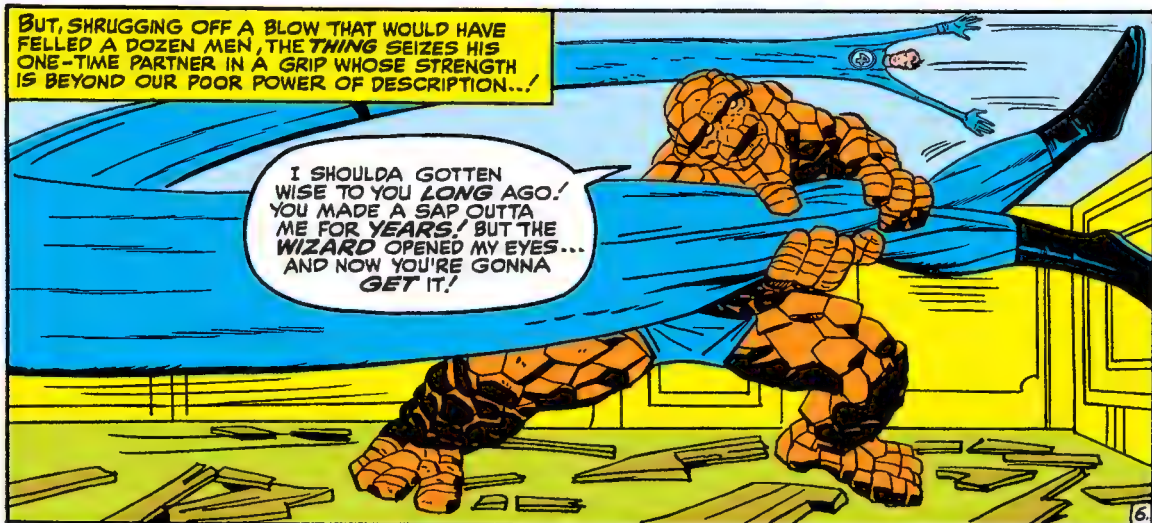
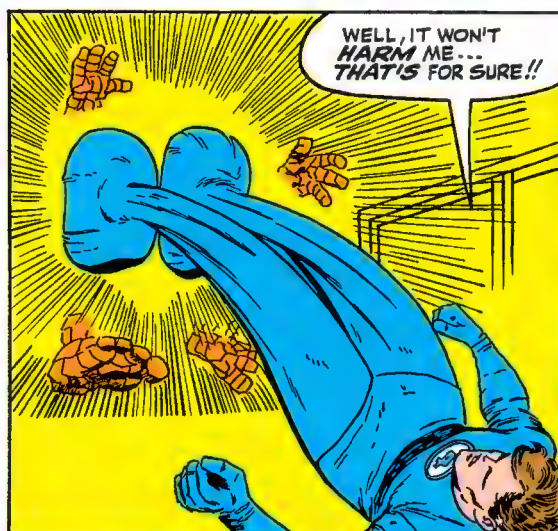
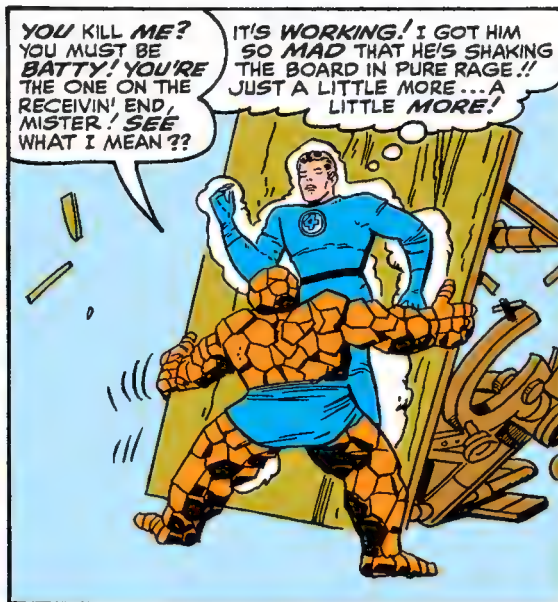
JUST LIKE THE WIZARD SAID... IT'S **YOUR** FAULT I'M AN UGLY CREEP... SO I'M JUST GIVIN' YA WHAT YA GOT **COMIN'!**

DON'T, BEN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! THEY'VE GOT YOU UNDER SOME SORT OF MENTAL CONTROL! **LISTEN** TO ME, BEN...!

IT'S NO USE! HE'S TOO FAR GONE! I CAN'T REASON WITH HIM!



ALL I CAN DO IS **CONTRACT** MY MUSCLES SUDDENLY... SO THAT HE'LL **MISS** ME AS I SNAP BACK TO NORMAL!



DESPERATELY, FRANTICALLY, THE BRILLIANT MR. FANTASTIC TRIES EVERY STRATAGEM HE IS THE MASTER OF... BUT HIS OPPONENT IS TOO STRONG... TOO POWERFUL...

I'VE GOT TO GET FREE... TO SAVE BEN FROM HIMSELF!

IN A WAY, BEN IS RIGHT! I AM TO BLAME FOR WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM! I CAN NEVER ESCAPE THAT RESPONSIBILITY!!

BUT I WANT TO HELP HIM, NOT HURT HIM! IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED! IF ONLY I KNEW HOW!

HE RELEASED ME! BUT... WAIT! WHAT'S HE DOING NOW??

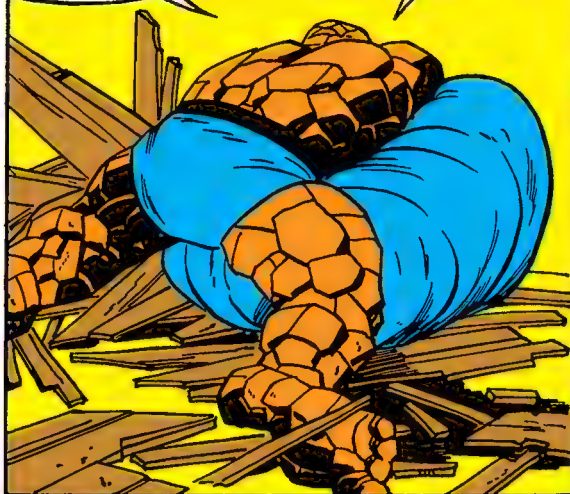
SO YER BEGINNIN' TO FEEL YER OATS, HUH?

WELL, HERE'S A WHOLE HUNKA WALL FOR YA TO CHEW ON!!

I'VE GOT TO ROLL MYSELF INTO A SPHERE, QUICKLY... TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE IMPACT!

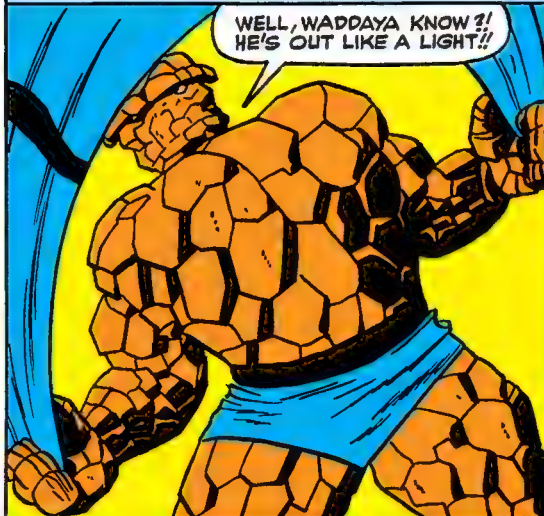
NO, YA DON'T! I'LL
GITCHA BEFORE YA
CAN STRAIGHTEN
OUT!

DON'T FORGET... I'M *WISE*
TO ALL YER LITTLE TRICKS,
MISTER!



THEN, FINALLY, EVEN THE TREMENDOUS STAMINA OF
MR. FANTASTIC GIVES WAY BEFORE THE
THING'S RELENTLESS ATTACK...!!

WELL, WADDAYA KNOW?!
HE'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT!!

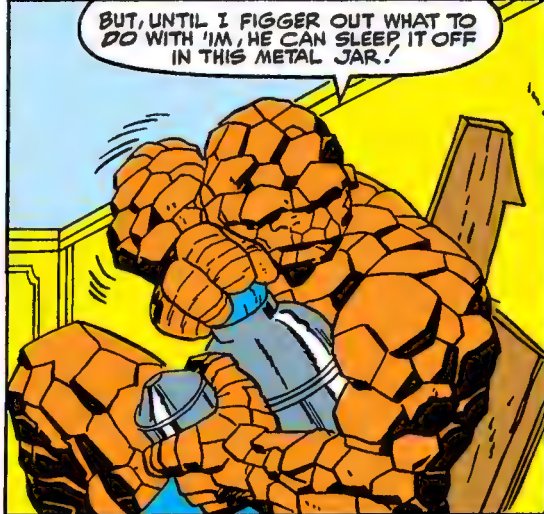


SO, I'LL JUST
FIX A LITTLE
SURPRISE
FOR 'IM WHEN HE
WAKES UP!

NOTHIN' CAN HURT THAT BLASTED
BODY OF HIS,
NO MATTER
HOW IT'S
SQUEEZED,
OR TWISTED,
OR
STRETCHED!

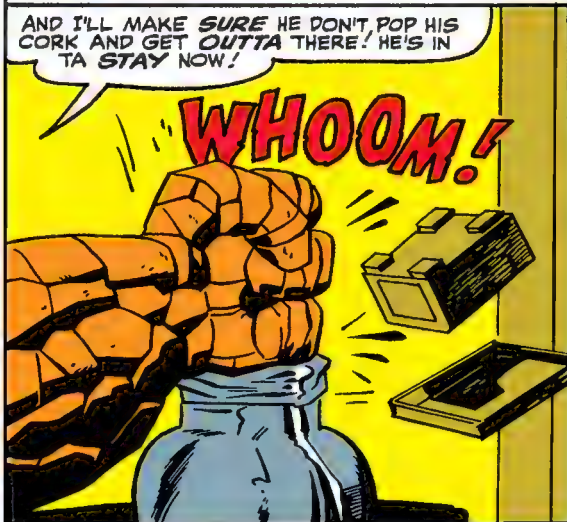


BUT, UNTIL I FIGGER OUT WHAT TO
DO WITH 'IM, HE CAN SLEEP IT OFF
IN THIS METAL JAR.



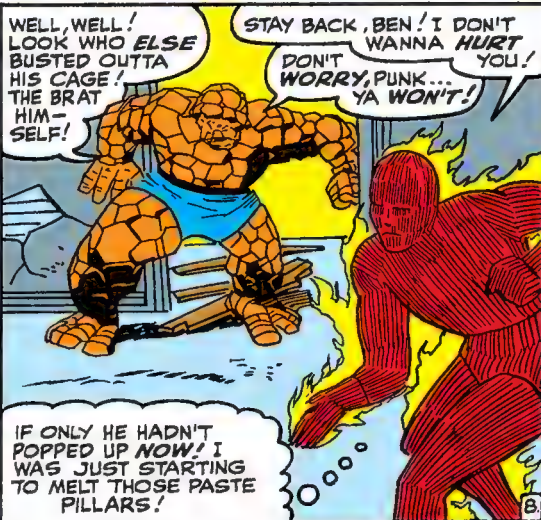
AND I'LL MAKE *SURE* HE DON'T POP HIS
CORK AND GET *OUTTA* THERE! HE'S IN
TA *STAY* NOW!

WHOOM!

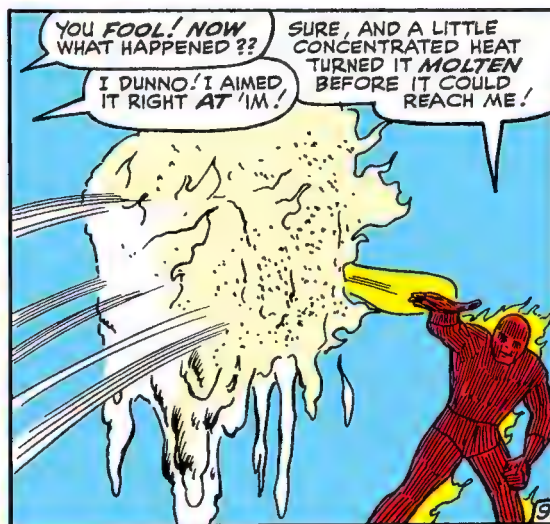
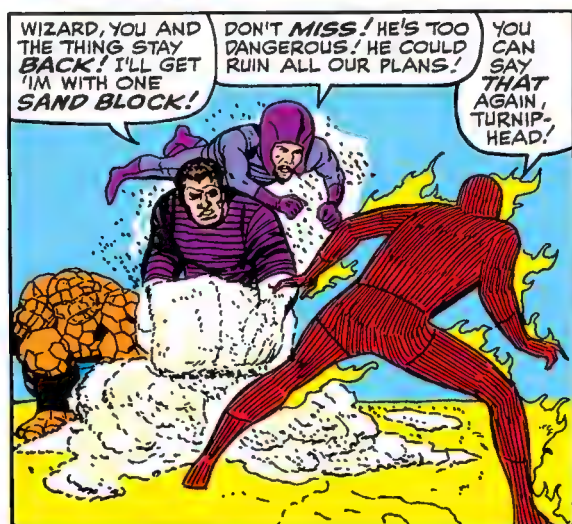
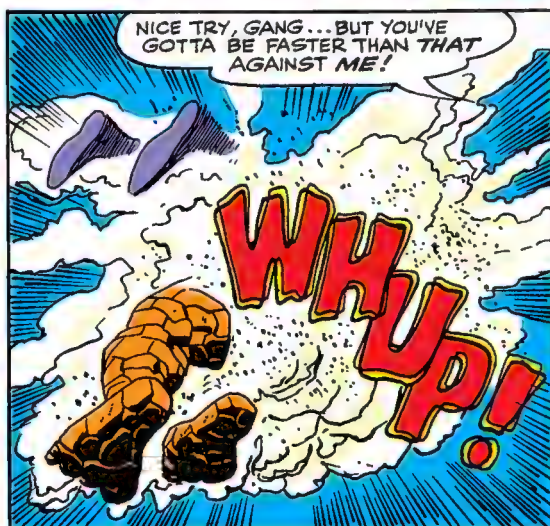
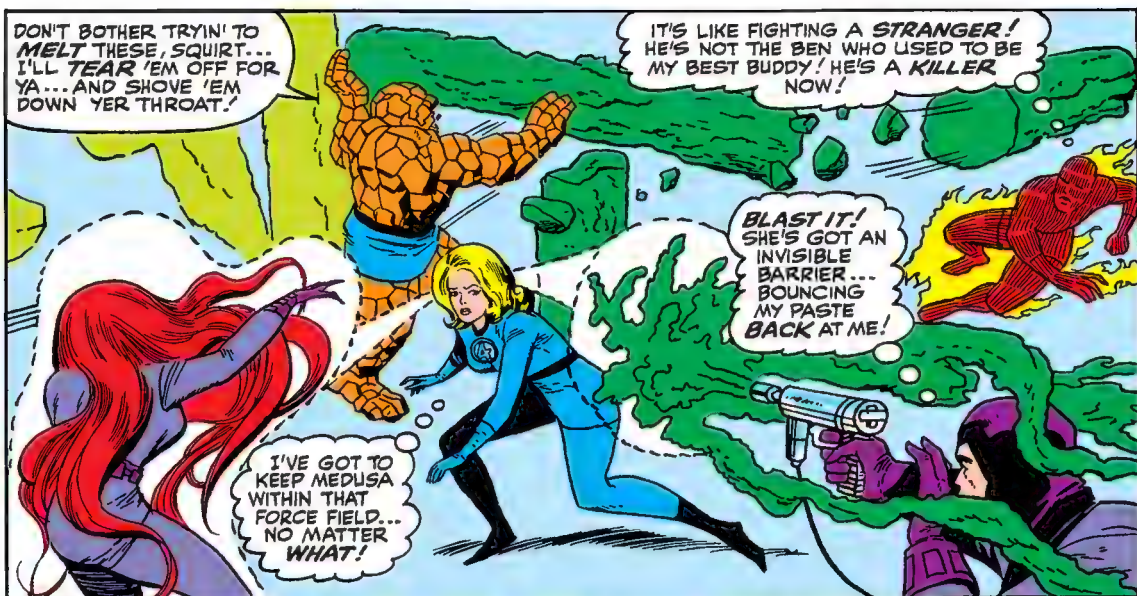


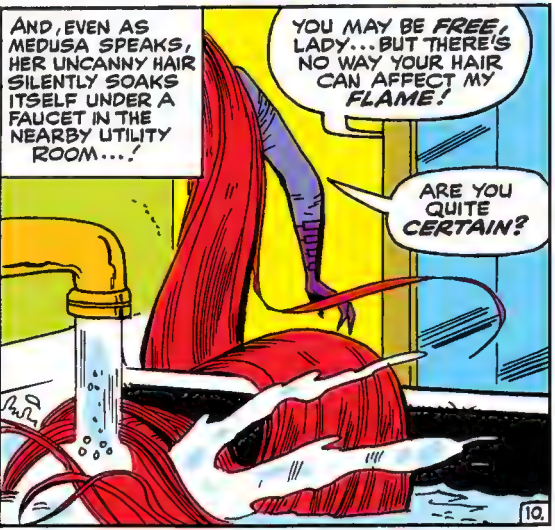
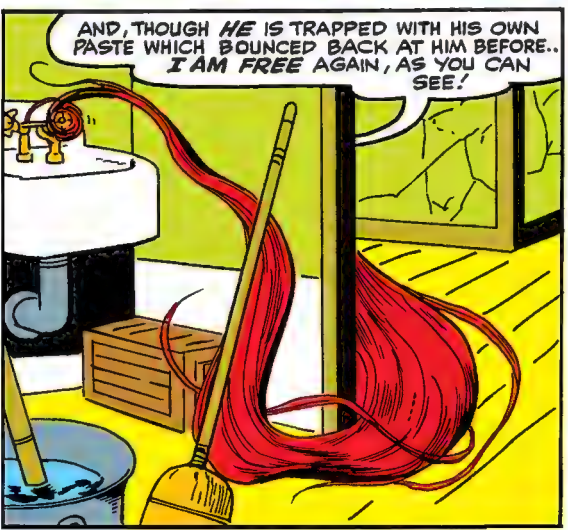
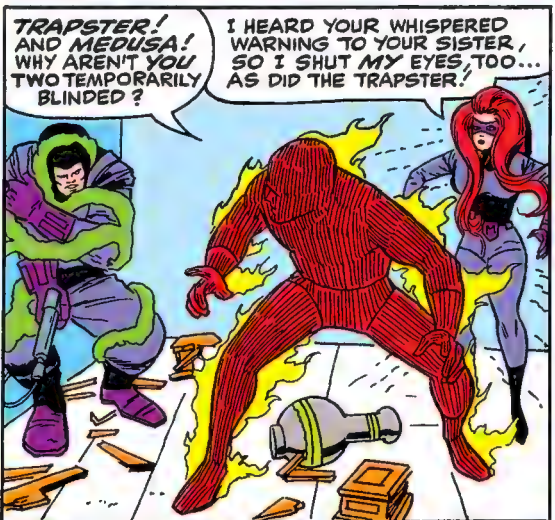
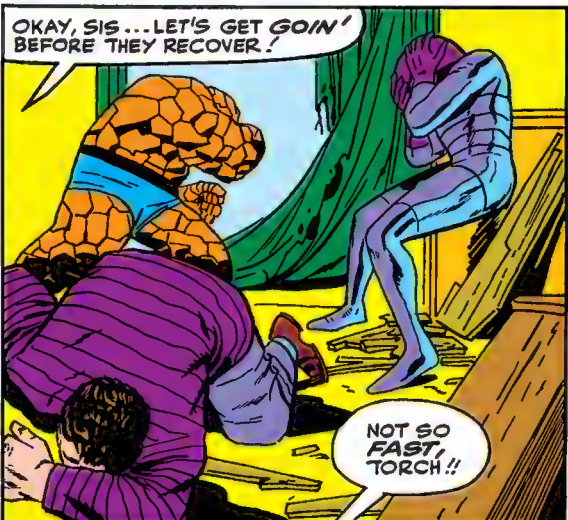
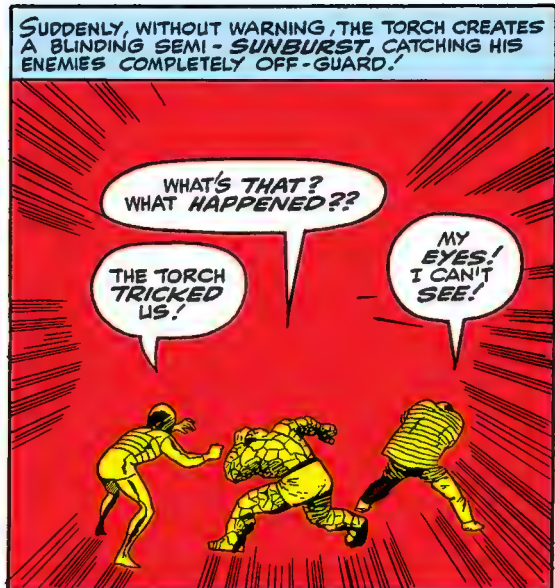
WELL, WELL!
LOOK WHO *ELSE*
BUSTED OUTTA
HIS CAGE!
THE BRAT
HIM-
SELF!

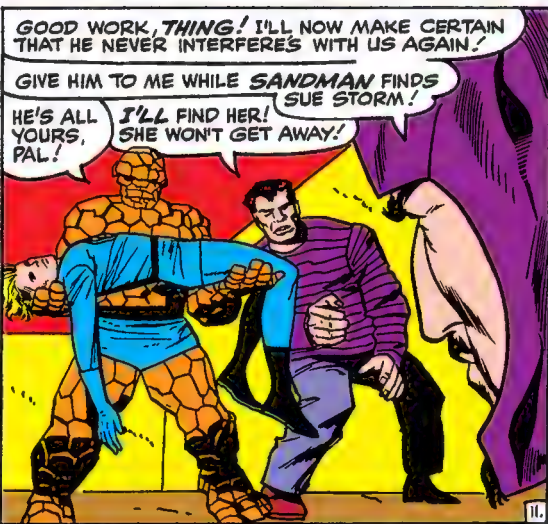
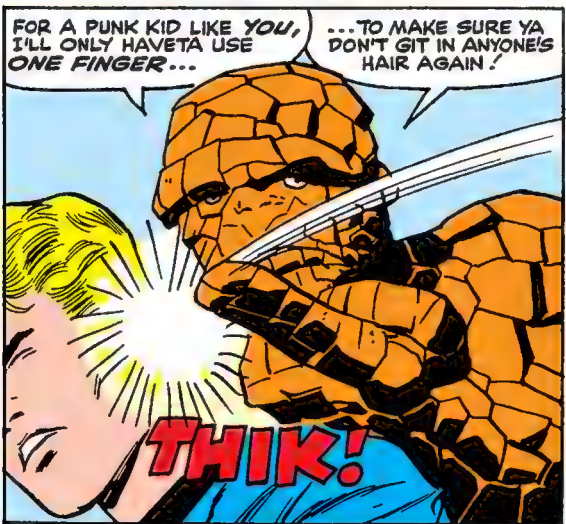
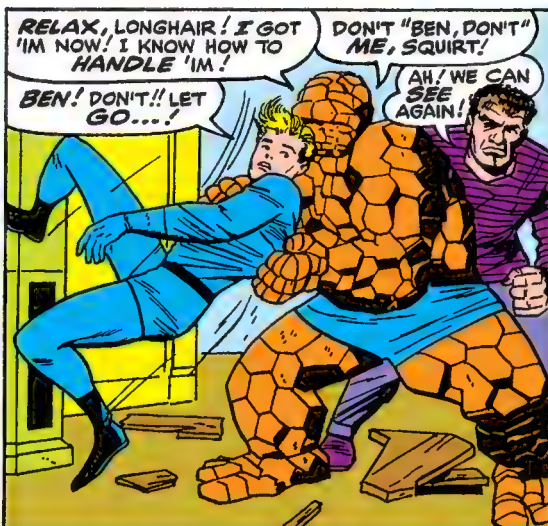
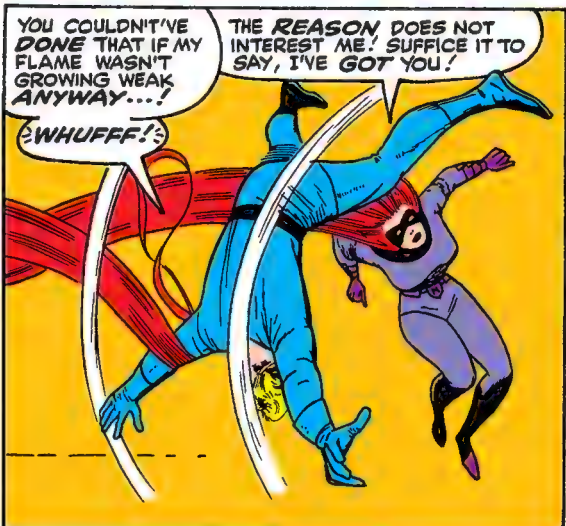
STAY BACK, BEN! I DON'T
WANNA HURT
YOU!
DON'T
WORRY, PUNK...
YA WON'T!



IF ONLY HE HADN'T
POPPED UP *NOW*! I
WAS JUST STARTING
TO MELT THOSE PASTE
PILLARS!



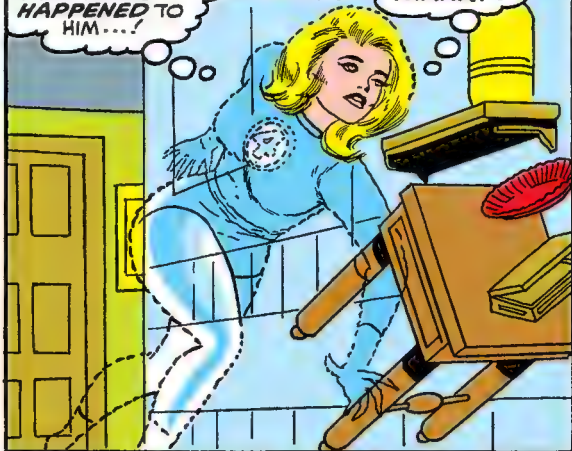




MEANWHILE, RESORTING TO HER INVISIBLE FORM, SUE STORM DESPERATELY SEARCHES FOR THE MAN SHE LOVES...

I'VE GOT TO FIND REED, NO MATTER WHAT! IF... IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM...!

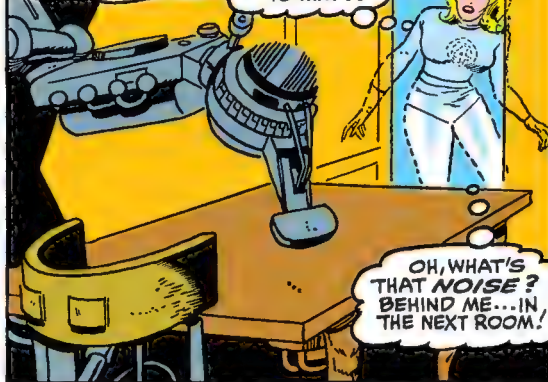
BUT NO, I MUSTN'T EVEN THINK THAT WAY!! NOT ABOUT THE MAN I'M GOING TO MARRY!



UNWITTINGLY, THE DISTRAUGHT GIRL PEERS INTO THE ROOM CONTAINING THE WIZARD'S ID MACHINE... THE SAME DIABOLICAL MACHINE WHICH HAS MADE THE THING CHANGE HIS PERSONALITY AND TURN AGAINST HIS FORMER PARTNERS...

THERE'S NOTHING HERE... EXCEPT THAT FORBIDDING-LOOKING MACHINE!

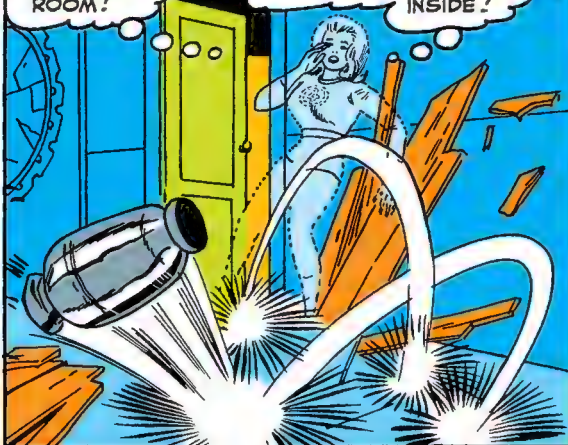
WHERE CAN HE BE?? WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM??



OH, WHAT'S THAT NOISE? BEHIND ME... IN THE NEXT ROOM!

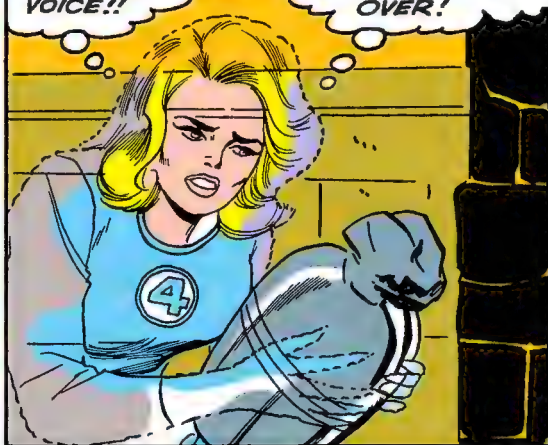
IT'S A JAR... BOUNCING AROUND THE ROOM!

IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! UNLESS... UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING ALIVE INSIDE!



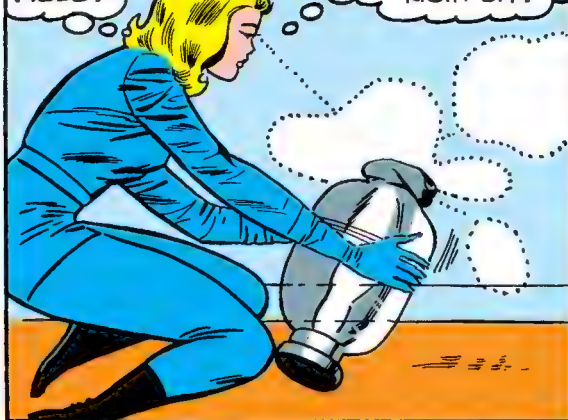
I HEAR SOMETHING FROM INSIDE... LIKE... A MUFFLED VOICE!!

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER... MY SEARCH IS FINALLY OVER!



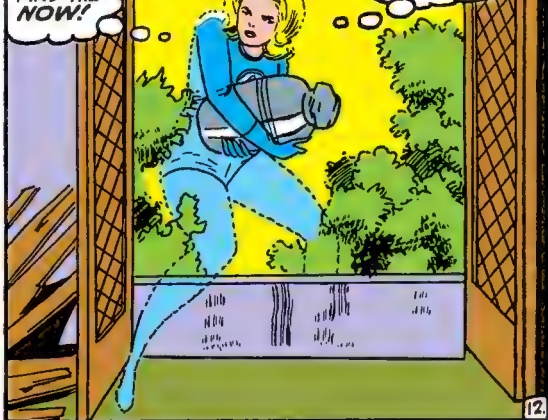
DON'T DESPAIR, MY DARLING! I'LL PRY THE LID OPEN WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!

I... I CAN'T! IT'S WEDGED TOO TIGHT! MY EFFORTS BOUNCE RIGHT OFF!

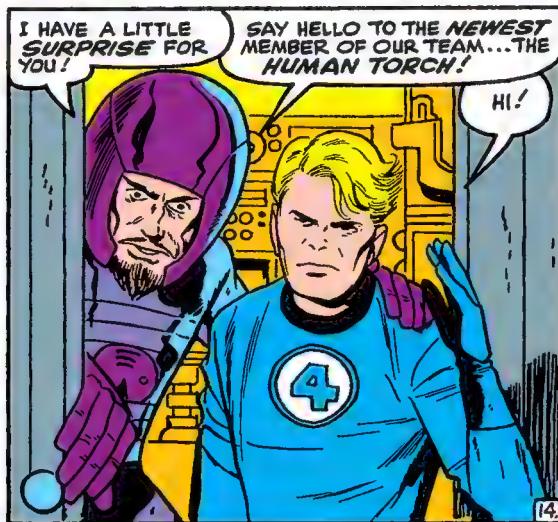
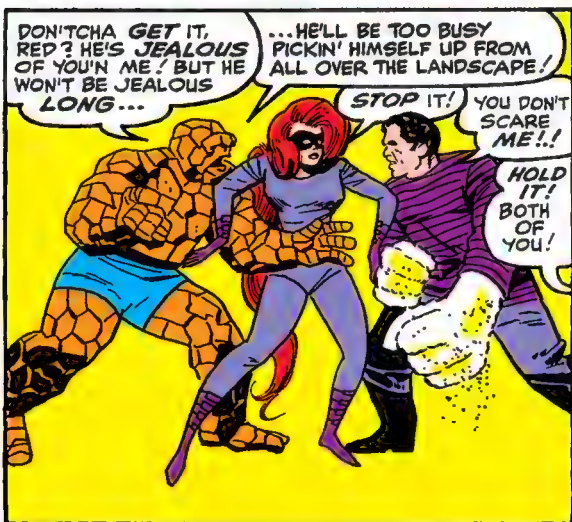
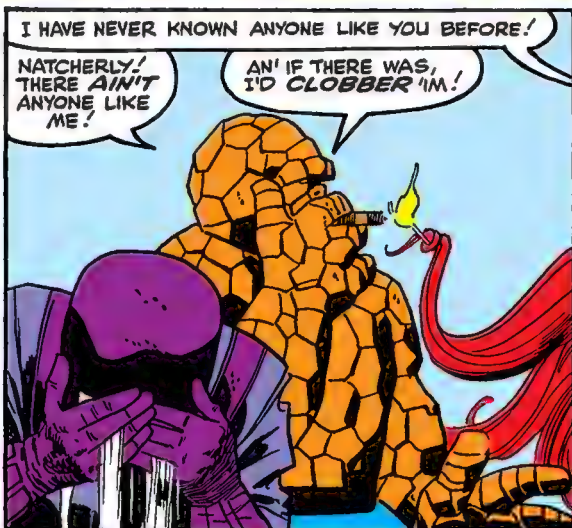


I HEAR VOICES! THEY MUSTN'T FIND ME NOW!

I'LL TURN INVISIBLE AGAIN AND LEAVE THROUGH THIS WINDOW! I MUST HAVE TIME TO THINK!

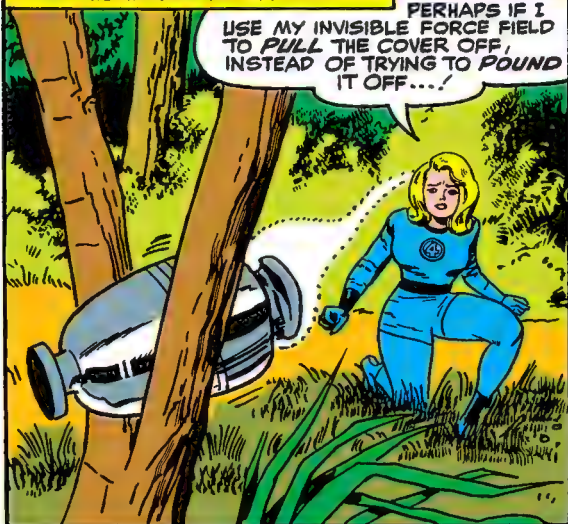




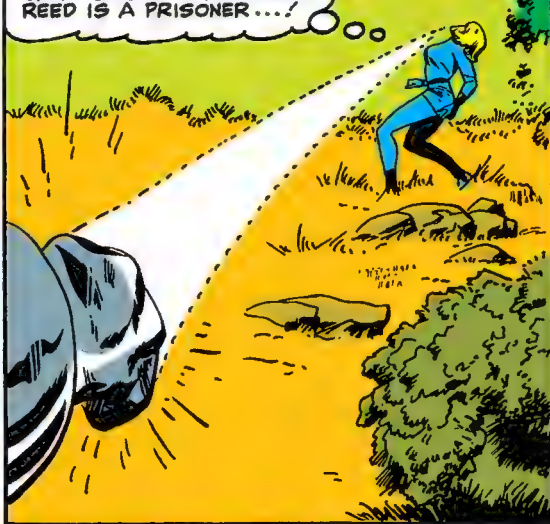


MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY WE FIND SUE STORM STILL TRYING TO EXTRICATE MR. FANTASTIC FROM HIS INCREDIBLE PRISON....

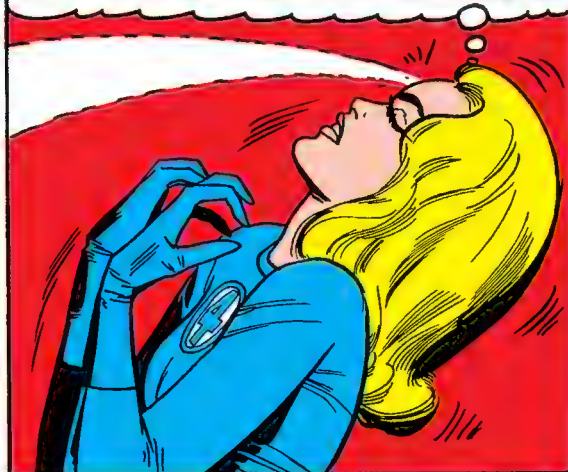
PERHAPS IF I USE MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD TO PULL THE COVER OFF, INSTEAD OF TRYING TO POUND IT OFF....!



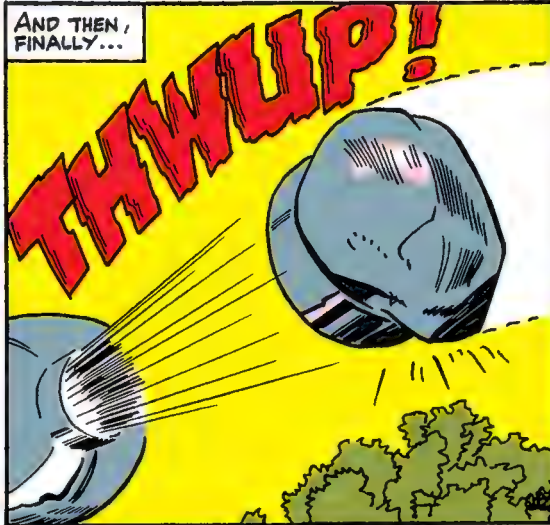
THE STRAIN...IT'S ALMOST UNBEARABLE... BUT I CAN'T GIVE UP...NOT WHILE REED IS A PRISONER....!



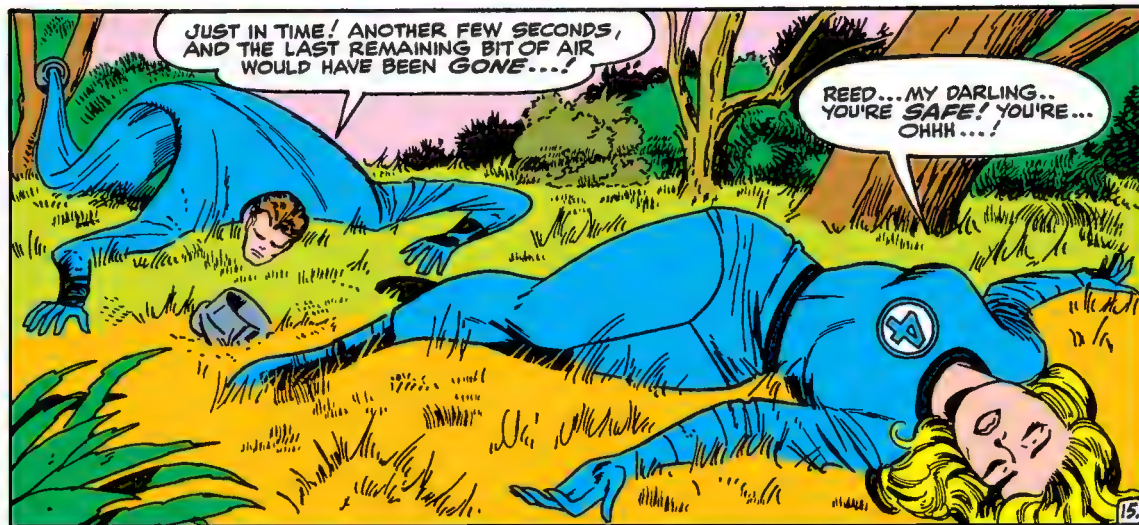
I...I'M BLACKING OUT!! NO! I MUST HOLD ON! ...JUST A LITTLE MORE... A LITTLE MORE...!



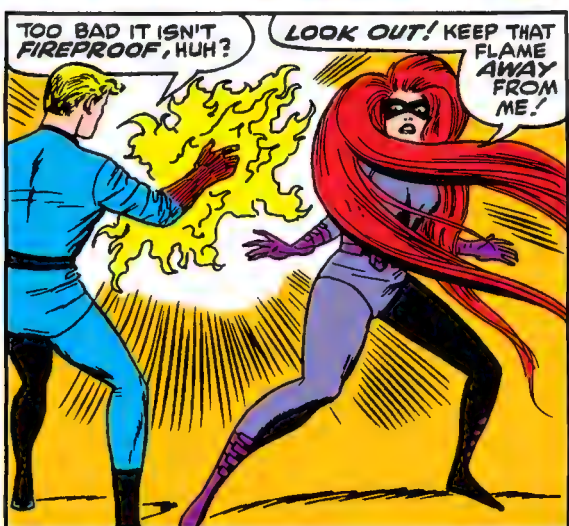
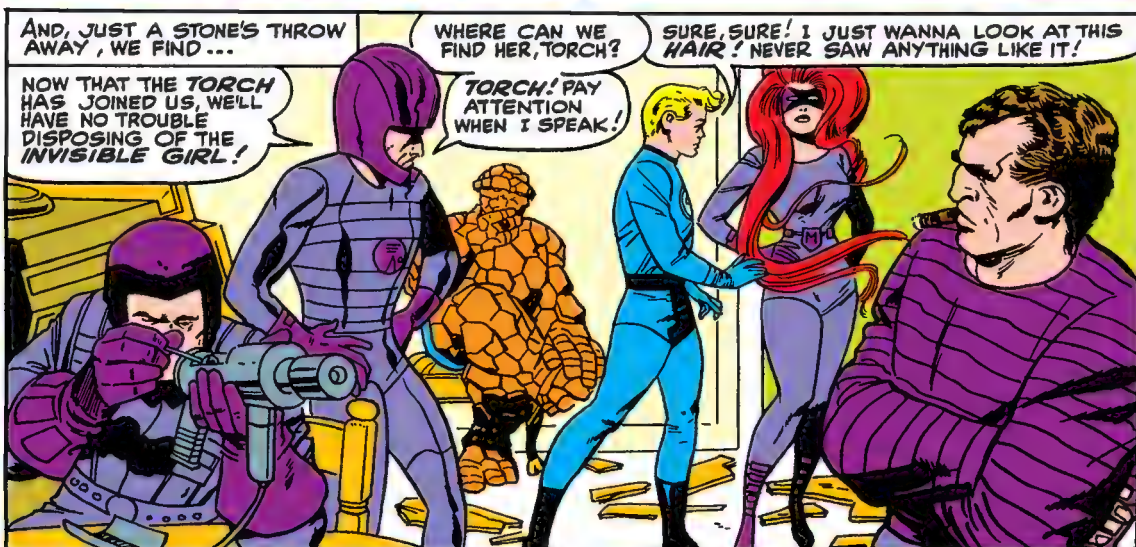
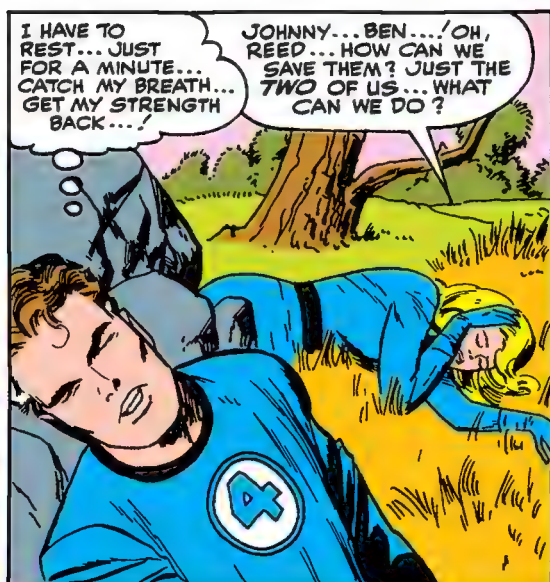
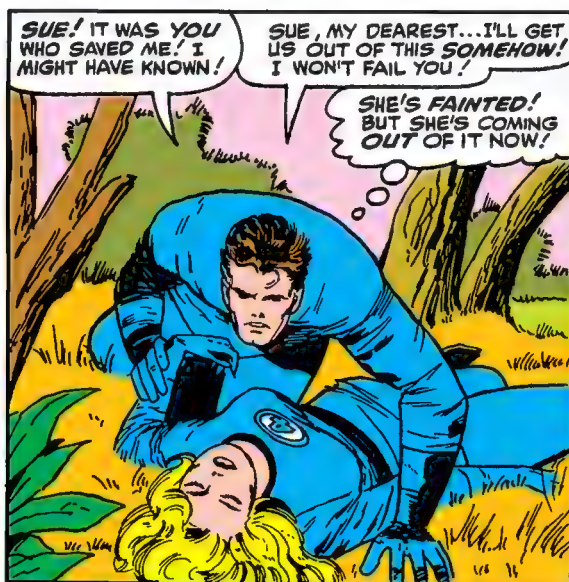
AND THEN, FINALLY...

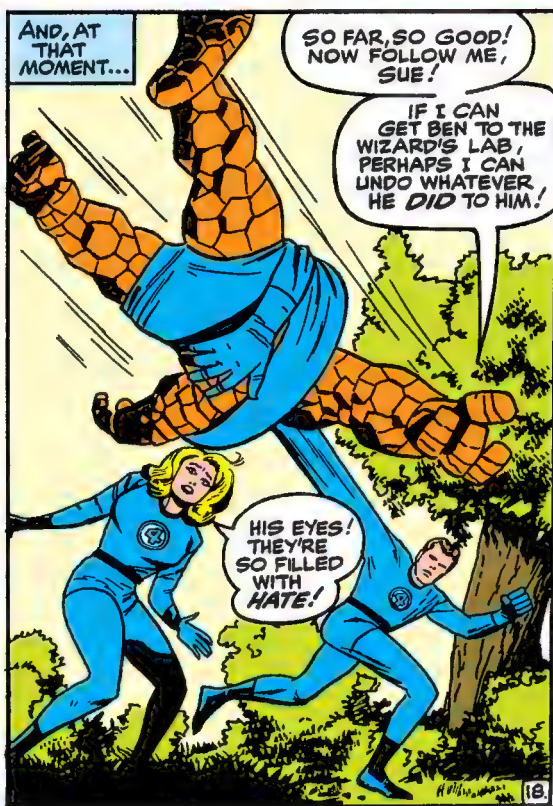


JUST IN TIME! ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, AND THE LAST REMAINING BIT OF AIR WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE....!



REED...MY DARLING... YOU'RE SAFE! YOU'RE... OHHH...!





I WON'T LETCHA
EXPERIMENT ON ME!!
I'LL KILL YA FIRST!
YOU TURNED ME INTO
THE THING... AIN'T
THAT ENUFF??

OH, BEN...
REED
WANTS
TO HELP
YOU!

DON'T WASTE
YOUR BREATH,
DARLING! LUCKILY,
THE ANTI-GRAV
DISC HAS HIM
SO OFF-BALANCE
HE'S TEMPORARILY
HELPLESS!

BUT, THE WIZARD... MASTER OF GRAVITY... IS
UNAFFECTED BY THE ANTI-GRAV DISCS, WHILE THE
TORCH HAD MANAGED TO DODGE THE ONE'S
NEAR HIM....!

COME WITH ME,
TORCH! MR. FANTASTIC MUST BE
FOUND... AND DESTROYED FOR
GOOD!

DON'T WORRY,
WIZARD! HE
CAN'T GET
AWAY FROM
ME!

NO MATTER HOW RICHARDS
BATTLES ME, HIS CAUSE IS
HOPELESS! SO LONG AS THE
ID MACHINE HAS MADE THE
TORCH AND THE THING MY SLAVES,
HE CANNOT LAST MUCH
LONGER!

FLAME
ON!

THEY CAN'T BE FAR
FROM HERE! I'LL
FIND 'EM!

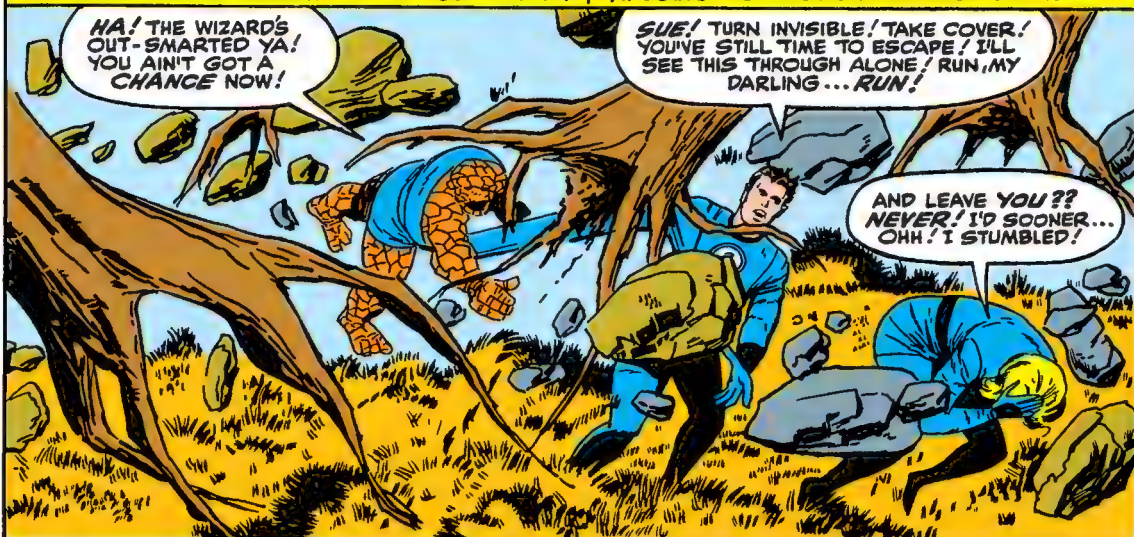
HE'S LIKE A BLAZING METEOR!
WITH HIS FLAME, AND THE
THING'S POWER, THE FRIGHTFUL
FOUR CAN RULE THE WORLD!

BUT FIRST,
RICHARDS AND
SUE STORM MUST BE
DISPOSED OF... FOREVER!

THE TORCH FLEW TOO FAST... HE
MISSED THEM! BUT, I CAUGHT A
GLIMPSE OF THEM HIDING BENEATH
THE TREES AS THEY RACE FOR
THE HOUSE!

NOW, I'LL
USE MY ANTI-
GRAVITY POWER
AS I'VE NEVER
USED IT BEFORE!

PRESSING A HIDDEN CONTROL STUD ON HIS MASTER ANTI-GRAV DISC, THE WIZARD CAUSES THE VERY TREES, GRASS AND ROCKS BENEATH HIM TO RISE IN THE AIR, EXPOSING THE FLEEING FIGURES BELOW...



HA! THE WIZARD'S OUT-SMARTED YA! YOU AIN'T GOT A CHANCE NOW!

SUE! TURN INVISIBLE! TAKE COVER! YOU'VE STILL TIME TO ESCAPE! I'LL SEE THIS THROUGH ALONE! RUN, MY DARLING... RUN!

AND LEAVE YOU?? NEVER! I'D SOONER... OHH! I STUMBLED!

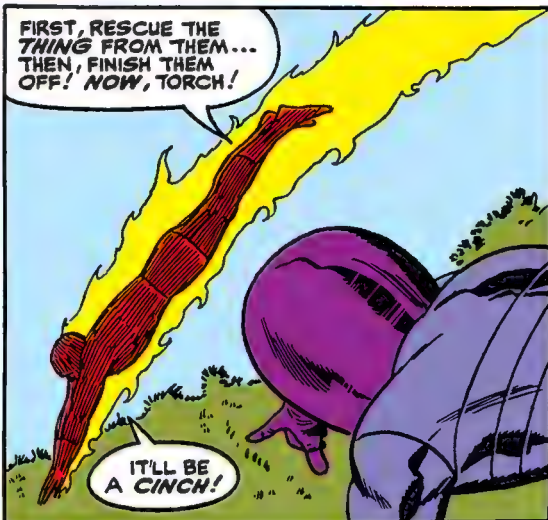
BUT, BY THE TIME THE VALIANT GIRL REGAINS HER FOOTING, BOTH SHE AND REED STAND TRANSFIXED, GAZING UPWARDS, AS THEY SEE...

IT'S JOHNNY! HE'S WITH THE WIZARD... TAKING ORDERS FROM HIM!

FIRST, BEN... NOW HIM! MY OWN BROTHER... DIVING DOWN TO ATTACK US!



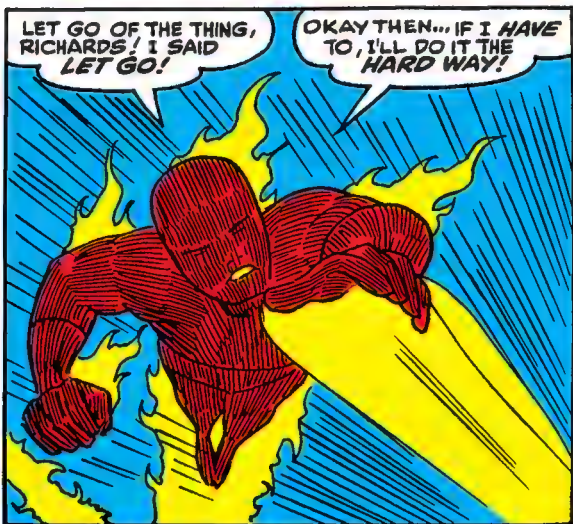
FIRST, RESCUE THE THING FROM THEM... THEN, FINISH THEM OFF! NOW, TORCH!



IT'LL BE A CINCH!

LET GO OF THE THING, RICHARDS! I SAID LET GO!

OKAY THEN... IF I HAVE TO, I'LL DO IT THE HARD WAY!



THEN, BEFORE REED CAN ACT... BEFORE SUE CAN TURN INVISIBLE... THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY A CRACKLING WALL OF FLAME, AS THEIR HOPE OF ESCAPE SEEMS TO TURN TO ASHES!



DON'T MISS THE GRIPPING FINALE OF THIS GREAT ADVENTURE NEXT ISSUE! SEE WHAT BEFALLS THE THING AND THE TORCH... LEARN THE FATE OF SUE AND REED... AND WATCH WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR! ALL THIS AND MORE AWAITS YOU ON THE ACTION-PACKED PAGES OF F.F. #43... NOW, MORE THAN EVER, YOUR KIND OF MAG!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

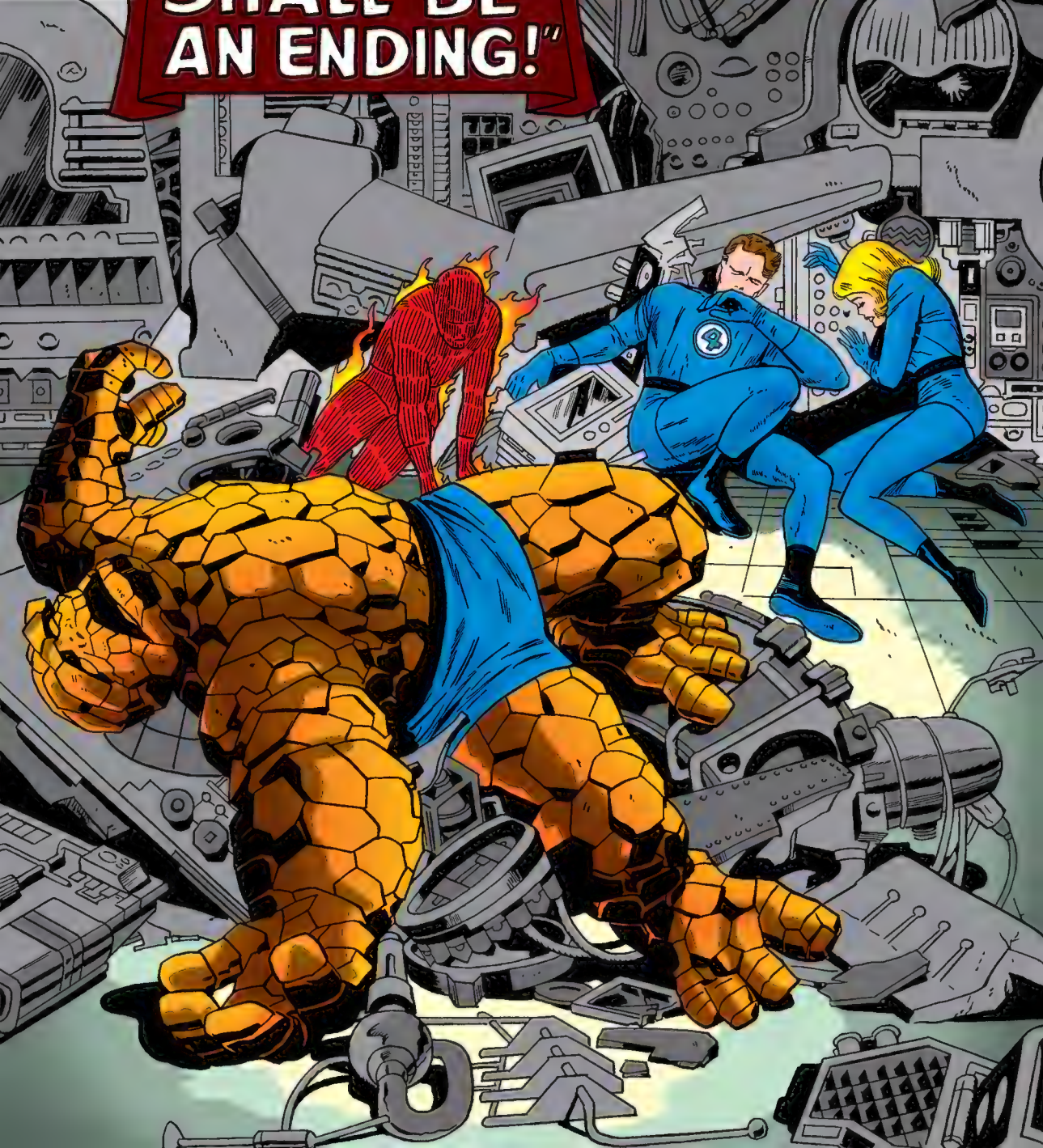
Fantastic

43
OCT

MARVEL
POP
ART 12¢
PRODUCTIONS

"LO, THERE
SHALL BE
AN ENDING!"

FOUR



THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR FINALLY LEARN...

**"LO! THERE SHALL
BE
AN ENDING!"**

TORCH! LOWER YOUR
FLAME, YOU JUVENILE
INCOMPETENT! INSTEAD OF
STOPPING THEM, YOU'RE
BLAZING AN ESCAPE
ROUTE THEY CAN FOLLOW!

CAN'T HELP
IT, I'M TRYIN'
NOT TO HIT
THE THING!

OUR LESSON FOR TODAY....

TRAPPED BY THEIR DEADLY
COUNTERPARTS, THE FRIGHTFUL
FOUR, REED AND SUE ATTEMPT
A DESPERATE ESCAPE WITH THE
HELPLESS THING, WHILE THE
FLAMING HUMAN TORCH LEADS
THE WIZARD IN HOT PURSUIT
OF HIS ERSTWHILE PARTNERS!

*NO PUN
INTENDED!

JUST WAIT!
I'LL GET THIS
BLASTED ANTI-
GRAV DISC OFFA
ME SOONER OR
LATER--AND
WHEN I DO--!

DARINGLY WRITTEN
BY STAN LEE

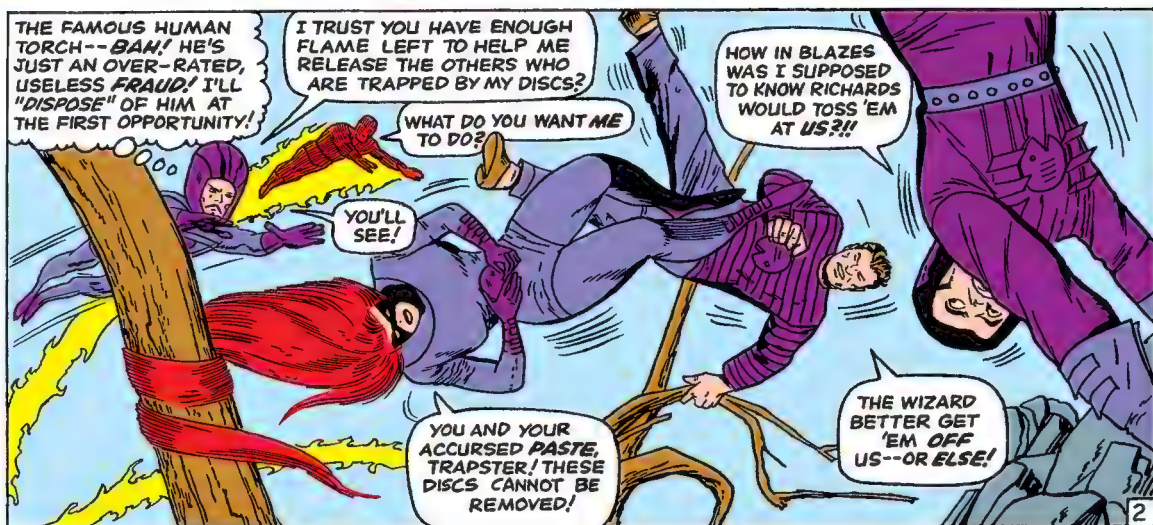
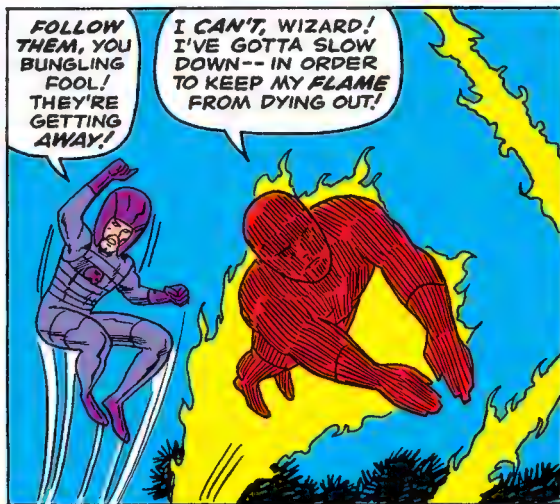
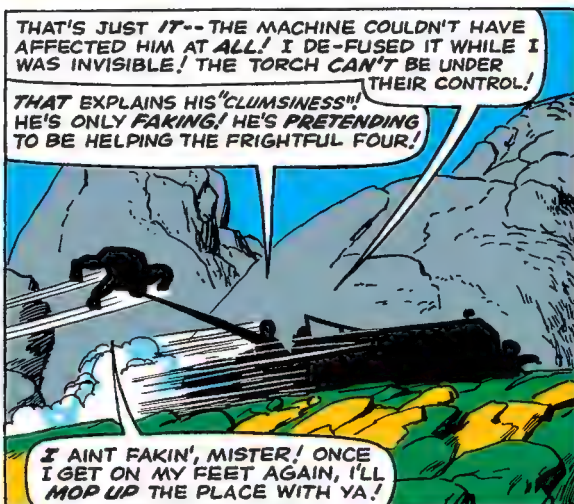
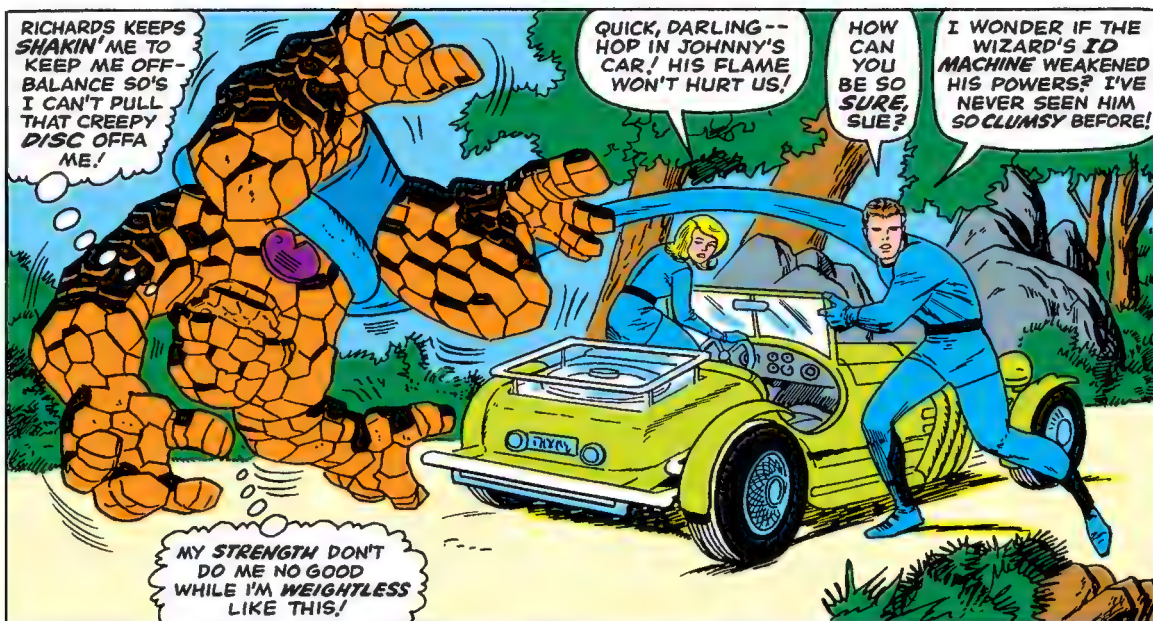
DAZZLINGLY DRAWN
BY JACK KIRBY

DRAMATICALLY INKED
BY VINCE COLLETTA

DOCILY LETTERED
BY ARTIE SIMEK

AND NOW...

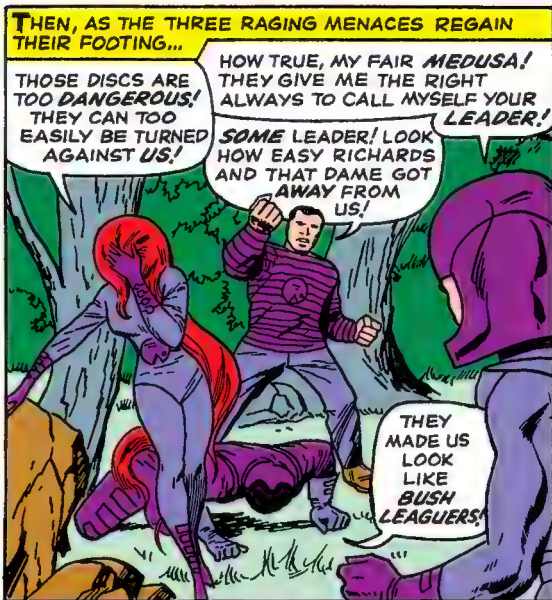
THE START OF ANOTHER SENSATIONAL
SPELLBINDER FROM MIGHTY MARVEL!





THEY MIGHT TRY TO TURN AGAINST ME BECAUSE OF THIS! THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU BESIDE ME, TORCH!

HOLD STILL, ALL OF YOU! MY MASTER DISC REVERSER WILL NEUTRALIZE THE ANTI-GRAVITY EFFECTS OF YOUR DISCS!

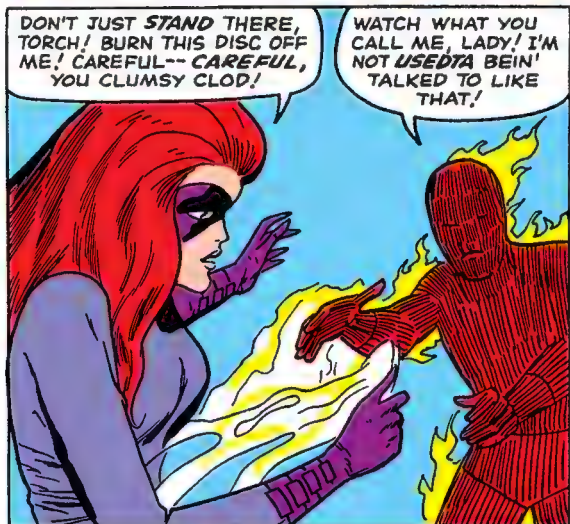


THEN, AS THE THREE RAGING MENACES REGAIN THEIR FOOTING...
THOSE DISCS ARE TOO DANGEROUS! THEY CAN TOO EASILY BE TURNED AGAINST US!

HOW TRUE, MY FAIR MEDUSA! THEY GIVE ME THE RIGHT ALWAYS TO CALL MYSELF YOUR LEADER!

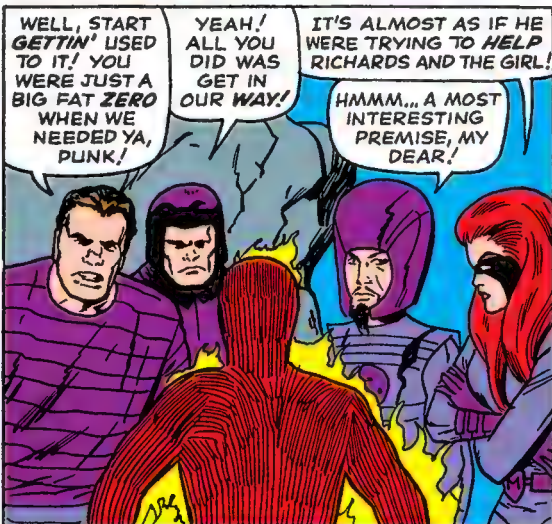
SOME LEADER! LOOK HOW EASY RICHARDS AND THAT DAME GOT AWAY FROM US!

THEY MADE US LOOK LIKE BUSH LEAGUERS!



DON'T JUST STAND THERE, TORCH! BURN THIS DISC OFF ME! CAREFUL-- CAREFUL, YOU CLUMSY CLOD!

WATCH WHAT YOU CALL ME, LADY! I'M NOT USED YA BEIN' TALKED TO LIKE THAT!



WELL, START GETTIN' USED TO IT! YOU WERE JUST A BIG FAT ZERO WHEN WE NEEDED YA, PUNK!

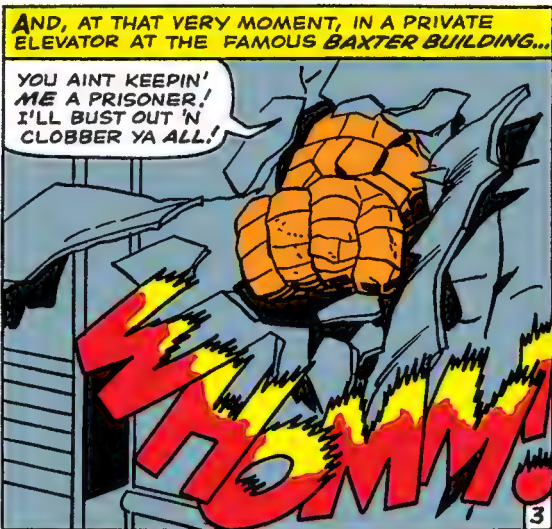
YEAH! ALL YOU DID WAS GET IN OUR WAY!

IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE WERE TRYING TO HELP RICHARDS AND THE GIRL!

HMMM... A MOST INTERESTING PREMISE, MY DEAR!

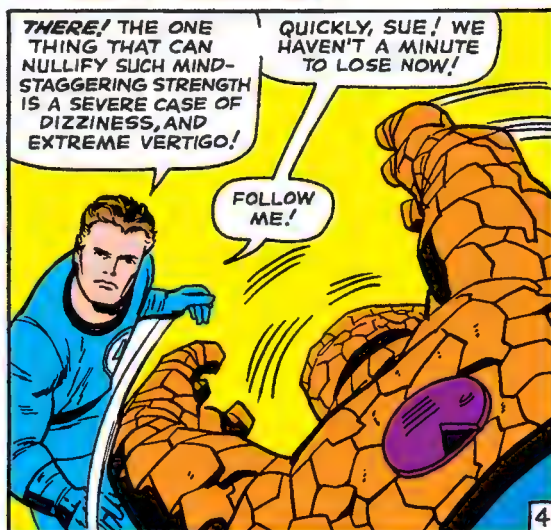
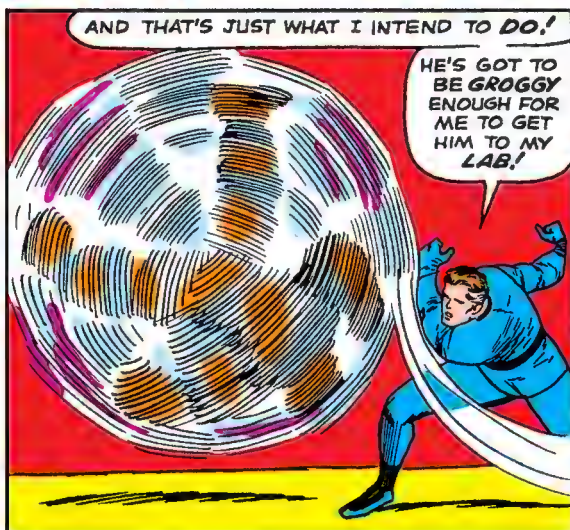
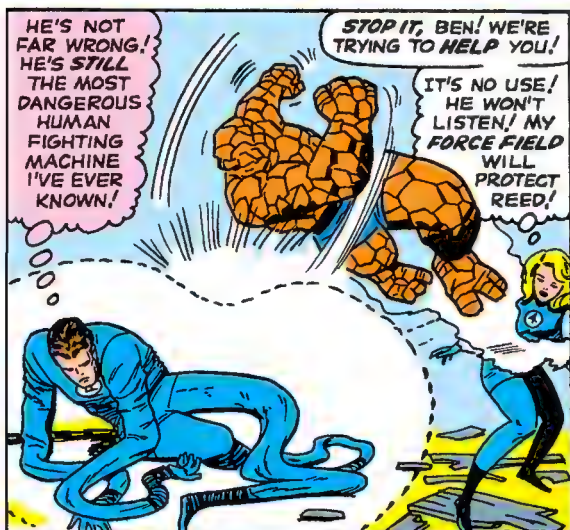
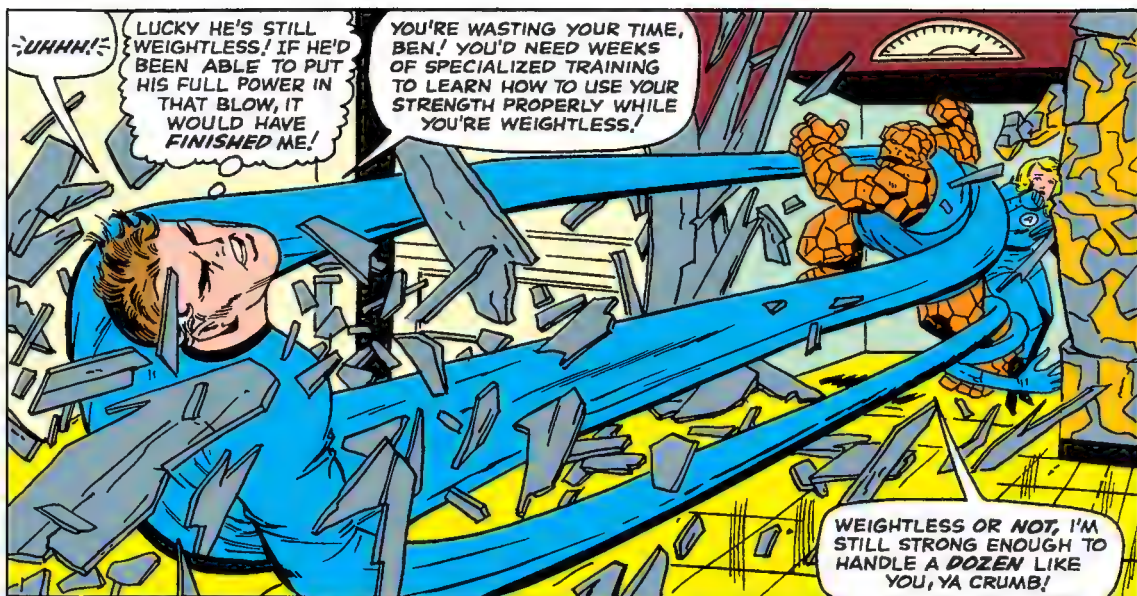


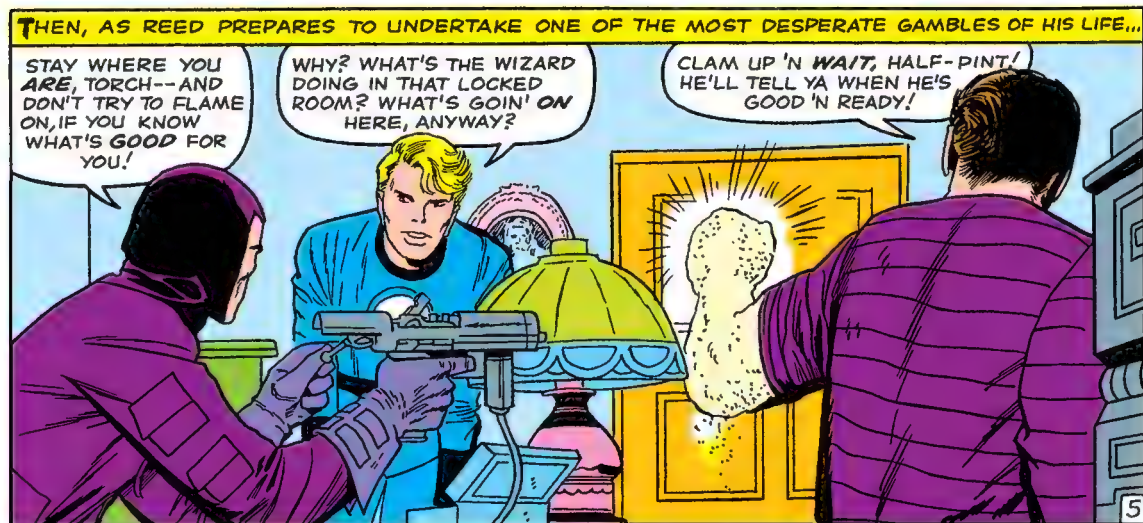
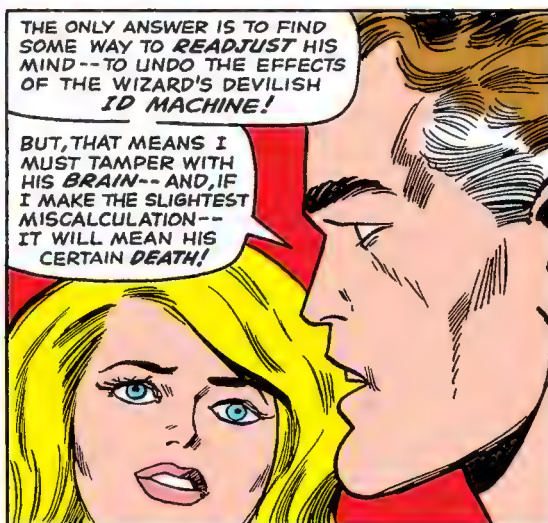
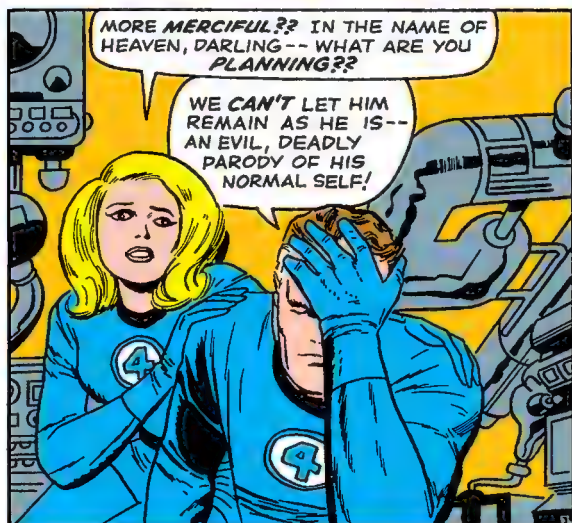
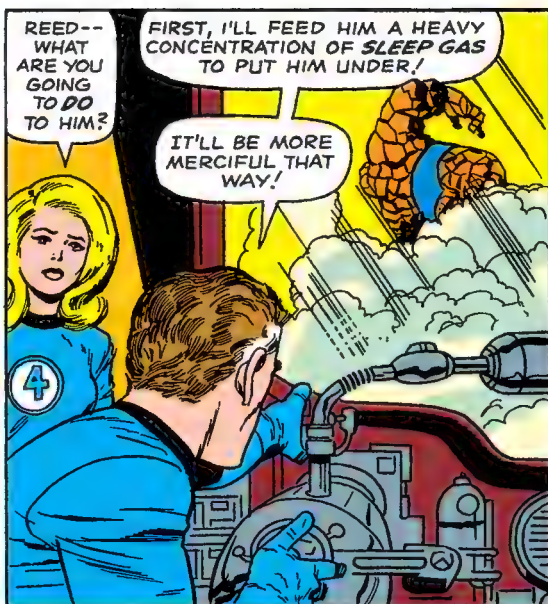
WELL, ALL YOU DID WAS DELAY THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME! THEY CAN'T KEEP THE THING HELPLESS FOREVER--AND ONCE HE BREAKS FREE, HE'LL DESTROY THEM!



AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN A PRIVATE ELEVATOR AT THE FAMOUS BAXTER BUILDING...

YOU AINT KEEPIN' ME A PRISONER! I'LL BUST OUT 'N CLOBBER YA ALL!





WHILE, BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS, WE FIND...

HAN! JUST AS I SUSPECTED! MY ID MACHINE HAS BEEN DE-FUSED! IT ISN'T OPERATING PROPERLY!

THEN THE TORCH HAS BEEN FAKING! HE /ISN'T/ UNDER YOUR CONTROL!

NOBODY CAN DECEIVE THE WIZARD! I'LL MAKE HIM RUE THE DAY HE TRIED IT! I'LL-- STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING??

SAVING YOUR LIFE, PERHAPS! HE'S STILL TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO BATTLE ALONE! MEDUSA SHALL HELP YOU!

AND SO... WELL, WHAT'S THE VERDICT, BEAUTIFUL? DO I HOLSTER MY PASTE-PISTOL-- OR USE IT?

I SUGGEST YOU HOLSTER IT FOR NOW, TRAPSTER! THERE'S NO NEED FOR US TO DO ANYTHING RASH!

NOW WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

ALL IN GOOD TIME, TORCH... ALL IN GOOD TIME!

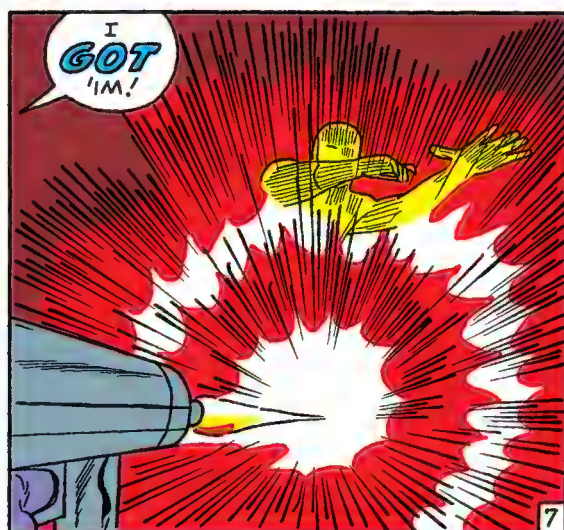
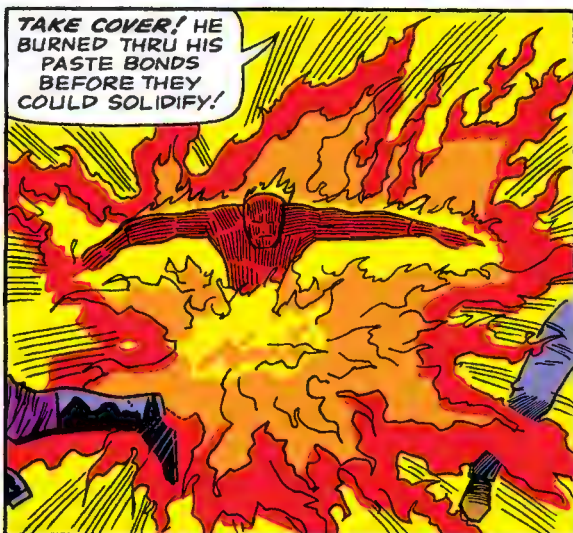
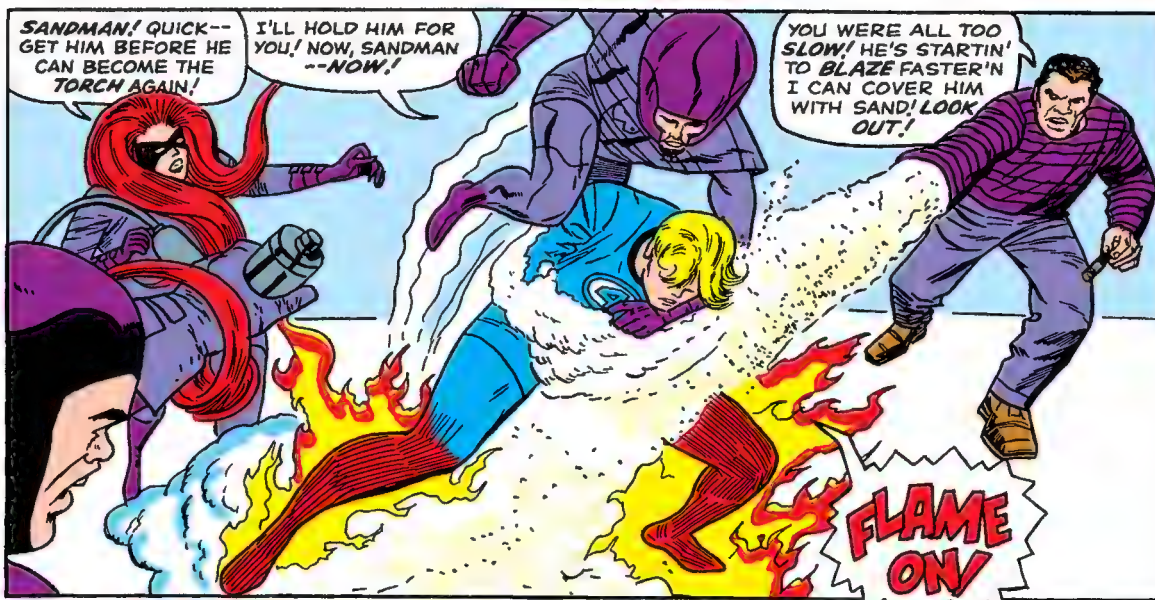
C'MON, GIT IT OVER WITH! CAT-'N-MOUSE GAMES ARE FOR KIDS!

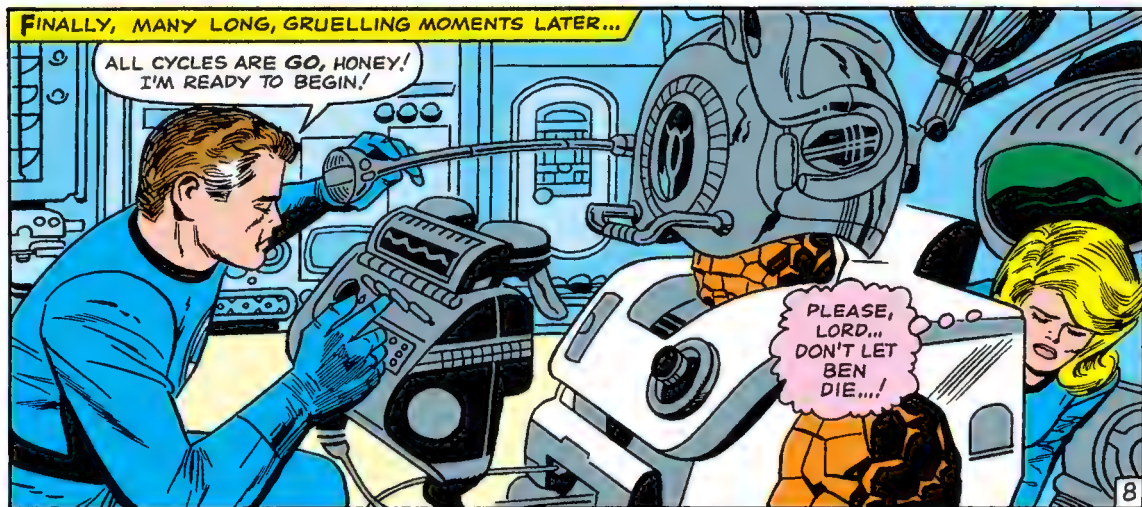
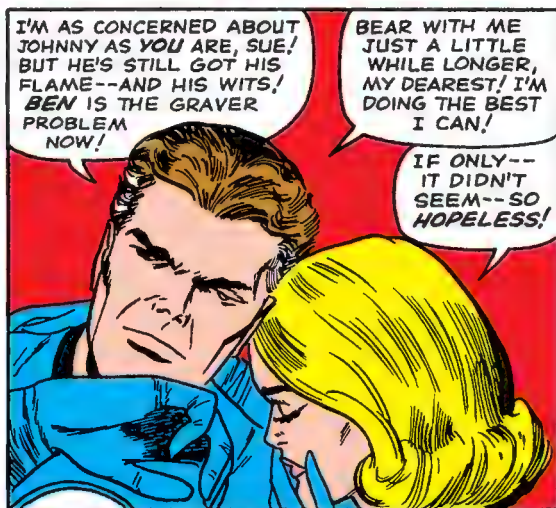
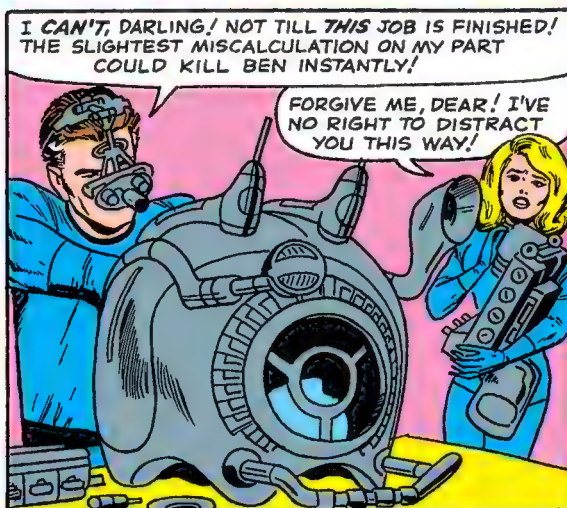
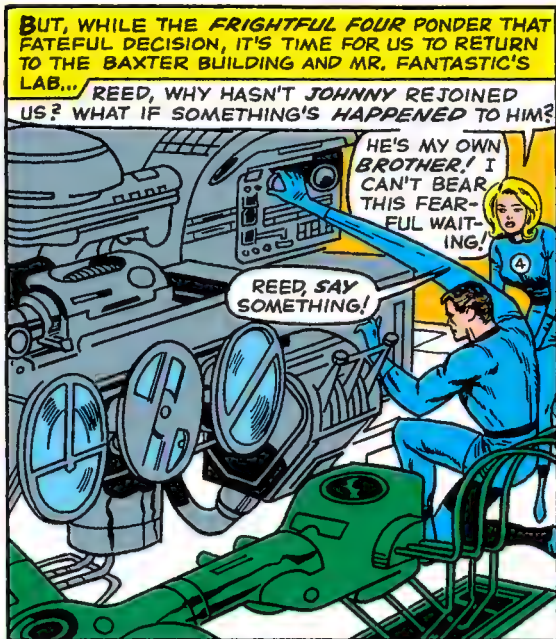
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, SANDMAN! AND THIS LITTLE GAME WILL BE ENDED VERY SOON!

THERE!! I DID IT! AND HE EXPECTED NOTHING!

PERFECT TIMING, MEDUSA!

SO, YOU'RE WISE TO ME, HUH?

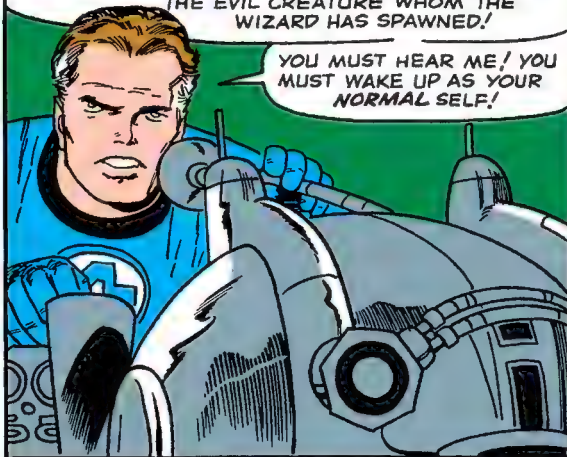




OPERATING HIS DELICATE MACHINE LIKE THE MASTER HE IS, REED RICHARDS BEGINS TO SPEAK SOFTLY-- GRIMLY-- BESEECHINGLY...

BEN, OLD FRIEND--WAKE UP! I'M SPEAKING TO THE REAL BEN GRIMM--THE REAL THING-- NOT THE EVIL CREATURE WHOM THE WIZARD HAS SPAWNED!

YOU MUST HEAR ME! YOU MUST WAKE UP AS YOUR NORMAL SELF!



YOU MUST BANISH THOSE FALSE IMAGES FROM YOUR MIND, BEN! YOU MUST RID YOURSELF OF THE HATRED, THE SAVAGERY THAT NOW DOMINATE YOUR BRAIN!



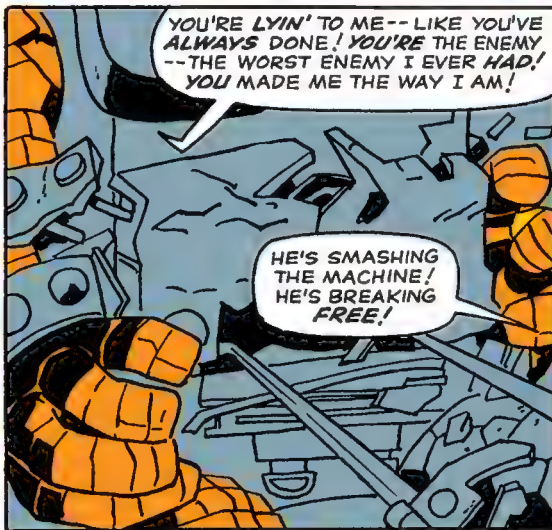
I'M NOT REACHING HIM! THERE'S NO RESPONSE! HE'S AWAKE-- BUT HE HASN'T CHANGED! HE'S STILL OUR ENEMY!

KEEP TRYING, REED! YOU CAN'T GIVE UP ON HIM NOW!



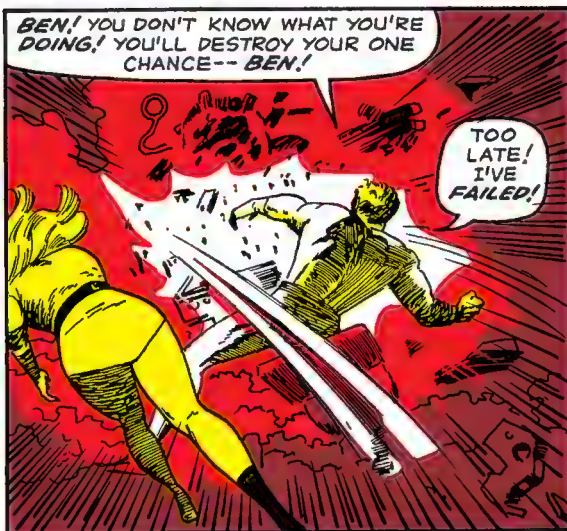
YOU'RE LYIN' TO ME-- LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE! YOU'RE THE ENEMY-- THE WORST ENEMY I EVER HAD! YOU MADE ME THE WAY I AM!

HE'S SMASHING THE MACHINE! HE'S BREAKING FREE!



BEN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! YOU'LL DESTROY YOUR ONE CHANCE-- BEN!

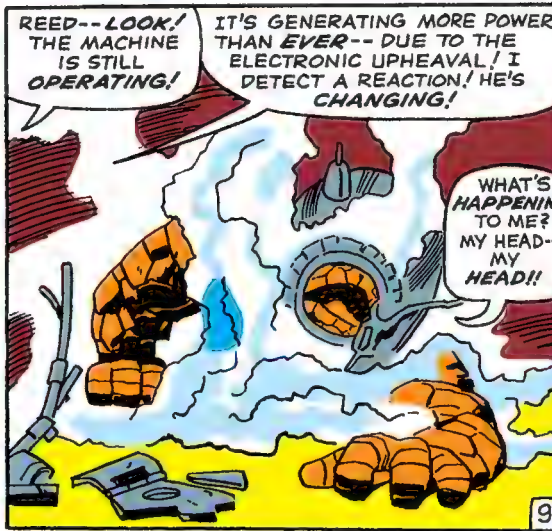
TOO LATE! I'VE FAILED!



REED-- LOOK! THE MACHINE IS STILL OPERATING!

IT'S GENERATING MORE POWER THAN EVER-- DUE TO THE ELECTRONIC UPHEAVAL! I DETECT A REACTION! HE'S CHANGING!

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO ME? MY HEAD-- MY HEAD!!





THIS IS WHAT I FEARED! EVEN IF THE EXPERIMENT WORKED, THE AFTER-EFFECTS MIGHT PROVE FATAL!

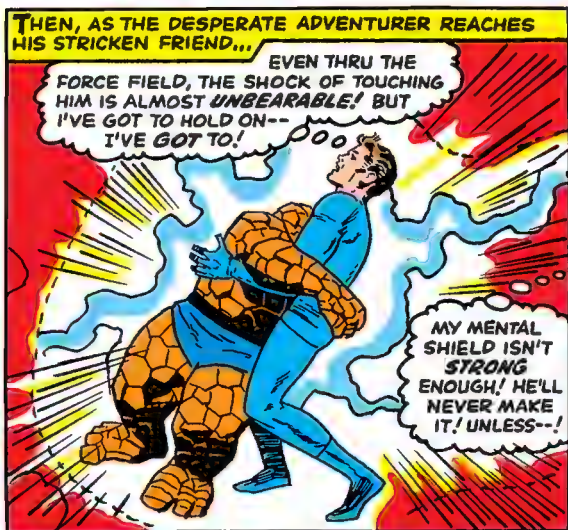
SAVE HIM!
DO SOMETHING
--ANYTHING!

IF I CAN
REMOVE THAT
HELMET FROM
HIS HEAD...



COVER ME WITH YOUR FORCE FIELD,
DARLING! I'VE GOT TO REACH HIM!

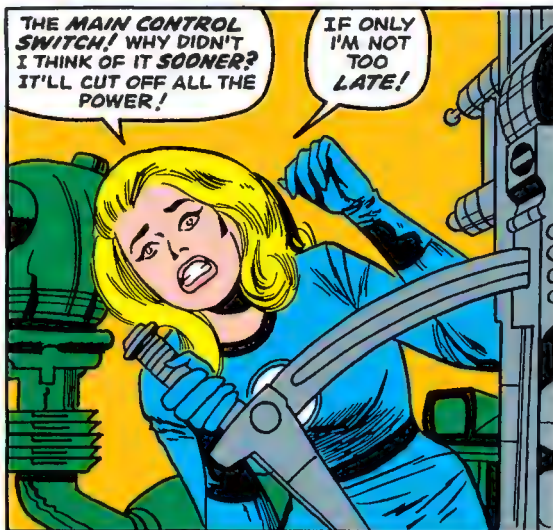
DON'T FALTER,
SUE! DON'T
WEAKEN! I'M
SURROUNDED
BY THOUSANDS
OF VOLTS OF
UNHARNESSED
CURRENT!



THEN, AS THE DESPERATE ADVENTURER REACHES HIS STRICKEN FRIEND...

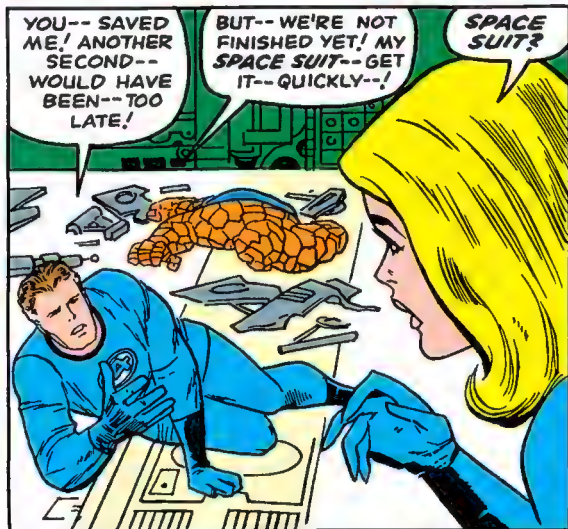
EVEN THRU THE
FORCE FIELD, THE SHOCK OF TOUCHING
HIM IS ALMOST UNBEARABLE! BUT
I'VE GOT TO HOLD ON--
I'VE GOT TO!

MY MENTAL
SHIELD ISN'T
STRONG
ENOUGH! HE'LL
NEVER MAKE
IT! UNLESS--!



THE MAIN CONTROL
SWITCH! WHY DIDN'T
I THINK OF IT SOONER?
IT'LL CUT OFF ALL THE
POWER!

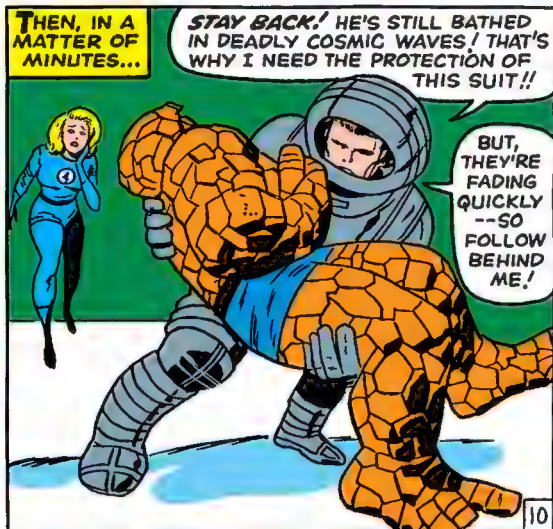
IF ONLY
I'M NOT
TOO
LATE!



YOU-- SAVED
ME! ANOTHER
SECOND--
WOULD HAVE
BEEN-- TOO
LATE!

BUT-- WE'RE NOT
FINISHED YET! MY
SPACE SUIT-- GET
IT-- QUICKLY--!

SPACE
SUIT?



THEN, IN A
MATTER OF
MINUTES...

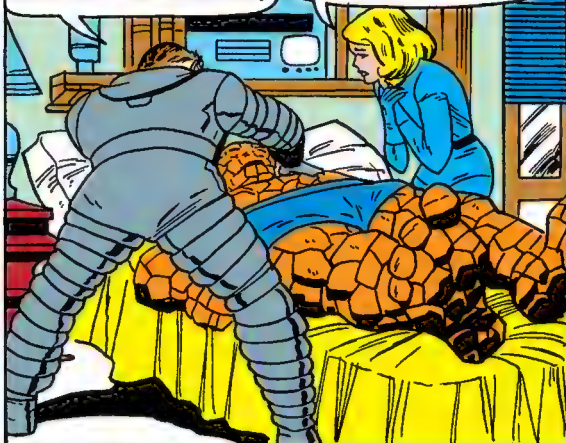
STAY BACK! HE'S STILL BATHED
IN DEADLY COSMIC WAVES! THAT'S
WHY I NEED THE PROTECTION OF
THIS SUIT!!

BUT,
THEY'RE
FADING
QUICKLY
--SO
FOLLOW
BEHIND
ME!

AND, BY THE TIME THE TRAGIC, UNCONSCIOUS THING IS PLACED UPON THE BED...

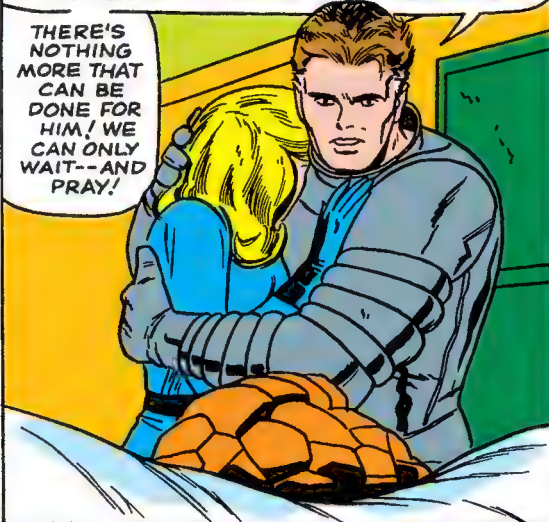
IT'S SAFE TO APPROACH HIM NOW, DEAR-- BUT DON'T TOUCH HIM FOR ANOTHER FEW MINUTES!

REED! HE'S SO STILL-- SO LIFELESS! IS HE-- IS HE-- OH, I CAN'T SAY IT!



I DON'T KNOW, SUE! I WAS UNABLE TO HEAR A HEARTBEAT, BUT HIS SKIN IS SO STRONG--- SO INSULATED-- THAT I CAN'T BE SURE!

THERE'S NOTHING MORE THAT CAN BE DONE FOR HIM! WE CAN ONLY WAIT--AND PRAY!

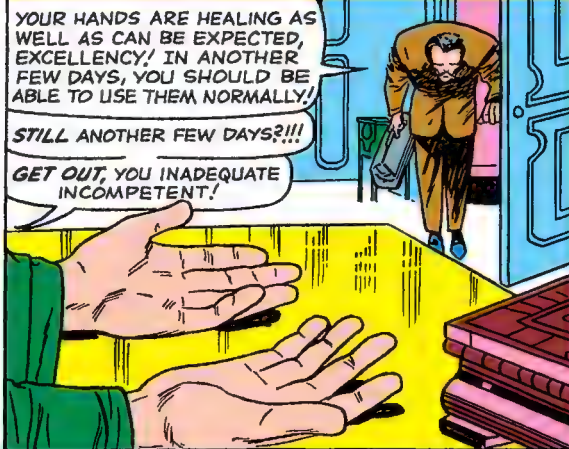


BUT, ONCE AGAIN, IT IS TIME TO CHANGE OUR SCENE --THIS TIME TO THE HEAVILY-GUARDED LATVERIAN EMBASSY BUILDING IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK...

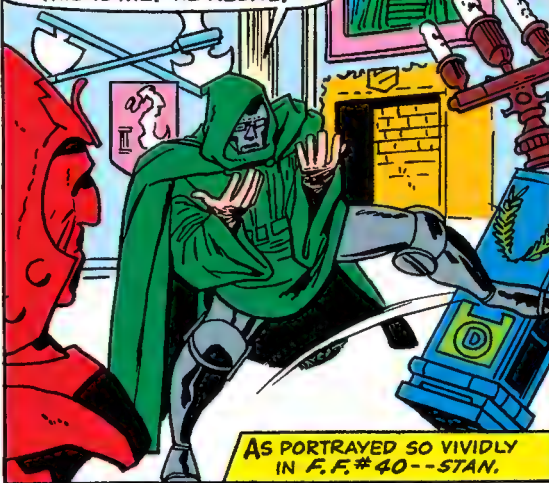
YOUR HANDS ARE HEALING AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED, EXCELLENCY! IN ANOTHER FEW DAYS, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE THEM NORMALLY!

STILL ANOTHER FEW DAYS?!!!

GET OUT, YOU INADEQUATE INCOMPETENT!



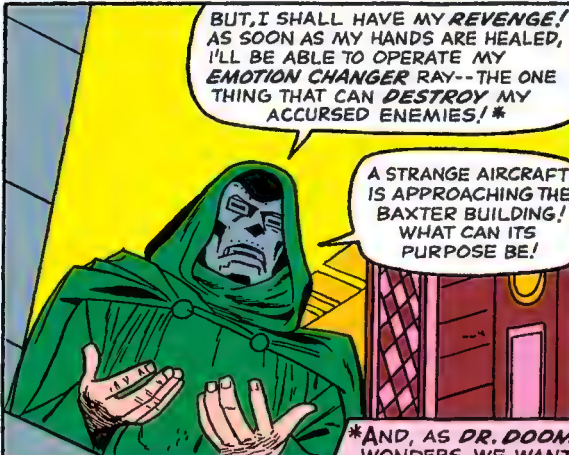
IT'S THE THING'S FAULT! HE DID THIS TO ME! HE ALONE!*



AS PORTRAYED SO VIVIDLY IN F.F.#40--STAN.

BUT, I SHALL HAVE MY REVENGE! AS SOON AS MY HANDS ARE HEALED, I'LL BE ABLE TO OPERATE MY EMOTION CHANGER RAY--THE ONE THING THAT CAN DESTROY MY ACCURSED ENEMIES!*

A STRANGE AIRCRAFT IS APPROACHING THE BAXTER BUILDING! WHAT CAN ITS PURPOSE BE!



*AND, AS DR. DOOM WONDERS, WE WANT

YOU TO KNOW THAT HE DOES USE HIS EERIE EMOTION CHANGER MACHINE IN THE GREAT F.F. ANNUAL, NOW ON SALE! (UNABASHED ADVERTISEMENT!) STAN.

FLYING NOISELESSLY, MANEUVERING EFFORTLESSLY, THE WIZARD'S WONDERFUL ANTI-GRAV AIRSHIP ZEROES IN FOR A LANDING ATOP THE MOST FAMOUS HEADQUARTERS' BUILDING IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE....!

ALL OF US AGAINST RICHARDS AND THE GIRL! IT'LL BE A CINCH!

DON'T BE A FOOL, TRAPSTER! FIGHTING ANY PART OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR IS NEVER A CINCH! YOU WILL FOLLOW MY PLAN TO THE LETTER!

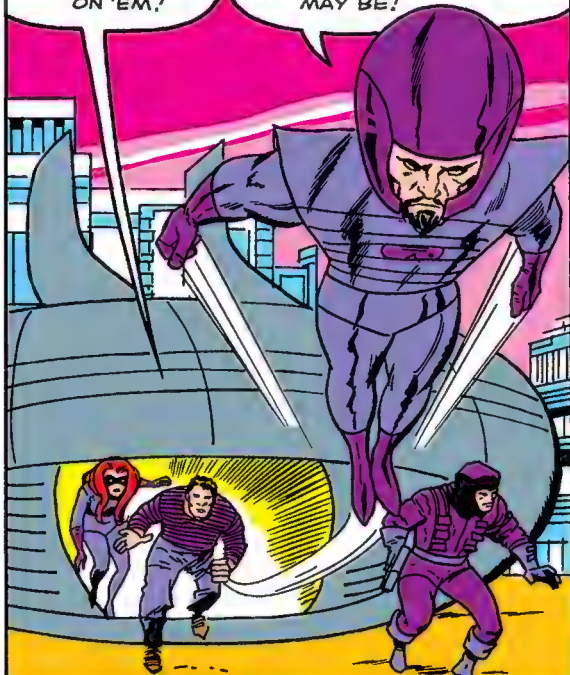
THE WIZ MUSTA GROWN UP ON OLD BASIL RATHBONE MOVIES, RED!

QUIET, SANDMAN! WE'RE LANDING!



OKAY, BIG BRAIN!
NOW THAT WE GOT
HERE, HOW DO WE
GET IN? RICHARDS
AINT LIKELY TO
LEAVE ANY DOORS
WIDE OPEN WITH
WELCOME SIGNS
ON 'EM!

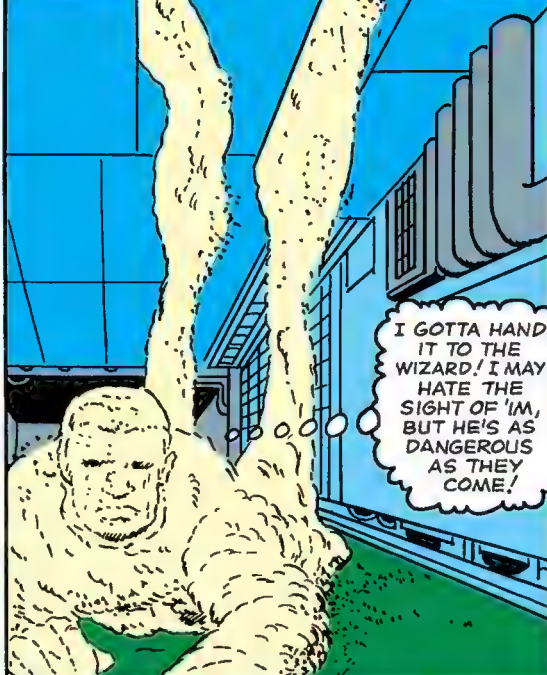
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN
YOUR OWN UNIQUE POWERS,
SANDMAN? YOU WILL ALTER
YOUR BODY MOLECULES TO
THE THINNEST SAND
PARTICLES, AND FILTER THRU
ANY CRACKS IN THE ROOF,
NO MATTER HOW SMALL
MAY BE!



WELL DONE! NOW
QUICKLY-- REVERSE
THE PROCESS AND
MAKE YOUR BODY
ROCK HARD BEFORE
THEY CAN BE
ALERTED!

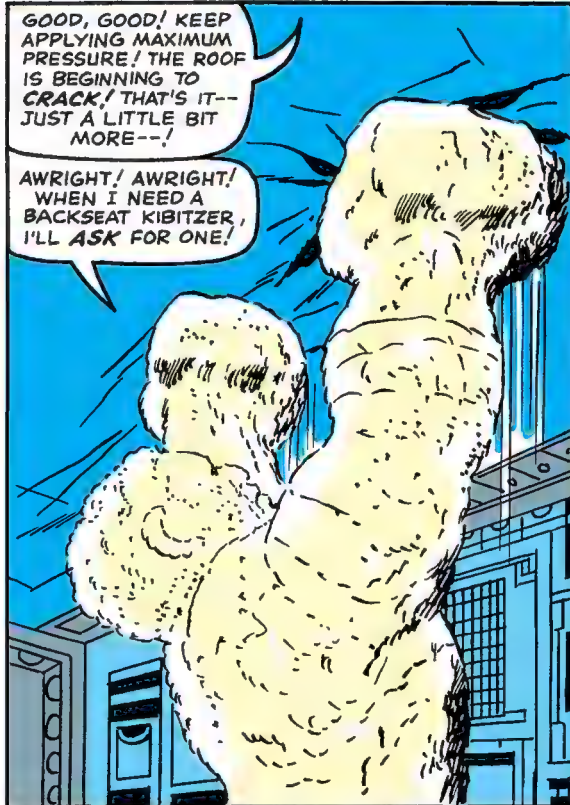
THEN WE
WILL
FOLLOW
PLAN "A"! WE MUST
NOT
FAIL!

I GOTTA HAND
IT TO THE
WIZARD! I MAY
HATE THE
SIGHT OF 'IM,
BUT HE'S AS
DANGEROUS
AS THEY
COME!



GOOD, GOOD! KEEP
APPLYING MAXIMUM
PRESSURE! THE ROOF
IS BEGINNING TO
CRACK! THAT'S IT--
JUST A LITTLE BIT
MORE--!

AWRIGHT! AWRIGHT!
WHEN I NEED A
BACKSEAT KIBITZER,
I'LL ASK FOR ONE!



PERFECT! YOU PEELED THE LAST
LAYER OF STEEL BACK LIKE A
BANANA SKIN!

NOW WE'RE READY
FOR OUR GREATEST
ATTACK-- OUR FINAL
VICTORY!



IT'S SAFE TO PROCEED NOW! I SHORT-CIRCUITED THE ELECTRONIC ALARM COMPLEX BY MANIPULATING THIN STRANDS OF HAIR IN THE WIRING!

JUST FOR THE **RECORD**, MY DEAR MEDUSA, YOU MIGHT MENTION THAT IT WAS **I** WHO TOLD YOU HOW!

SANDMAN--GIVE THE WIZ A GOLD STAR!

CLAM UP! THEY'RE JUST AHEAD OF US!

WHAT THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR **DON'T** REALIZE IS THAT EVEN MEDUSA'S PROBING COULD NOT HAVE NULLIFIED MR. FANTASTIC'S BRILLIANT ALARM SYSTEM--BUT, SUE HAD FORGOTTEN TO ACTIVATE THE MAIN CONTROL SWITCH AFTER TURNING IT OFF! AND NOW...

HE **IS** ALIVE, SUE--AND I THINK I'M GETTING A POSITIVE REACTION...

DOES THAT MEAN--??

IT'S TOO SOON TO TELL--BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE THAT I'VE WON!

MY BATTERY-POWERED BRAIN-WAVE DEFINER SHOWS A DEFINITE **CHANGE** IN HIS BASIC ID PATTERN--!

BUT--IS IT FOR THE BETTER--OR WORSE--?

SUPPOSE YOU LET **US** ANSWER THAT?!!

REED! LOOK OUT...!

MEDUSA!

NOT JUST MEDUSA, RICHARDS! THE ENTIRE **FRIGHTFUL FOUR**, IN FULL STRIKING FORCE!

STAND WHERE YOU ARE!

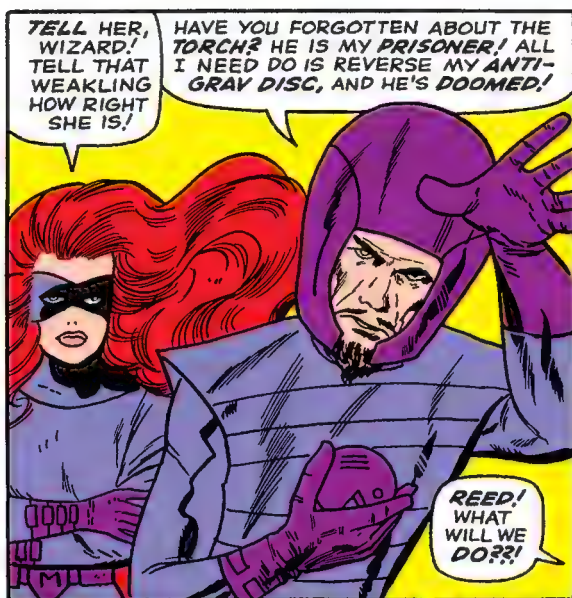
C'MON--LET'S PLOW INTO 'EM!

NO NEED FOR US TO WAGE BATTLE AGAIN! THEY WON'T **DARE** RESIST US THIS TIME!

GUESS AGAIN, WIZARD! I'M **READY** FOR YOU THIS TIME! EVEN SINGLE-HANDED, I'LL OUT-FIGHT ALL **FOUR** OF YOU!

NOT SINGLE-HANDED, MY DARLING! I'M AT YOUR SIDE!

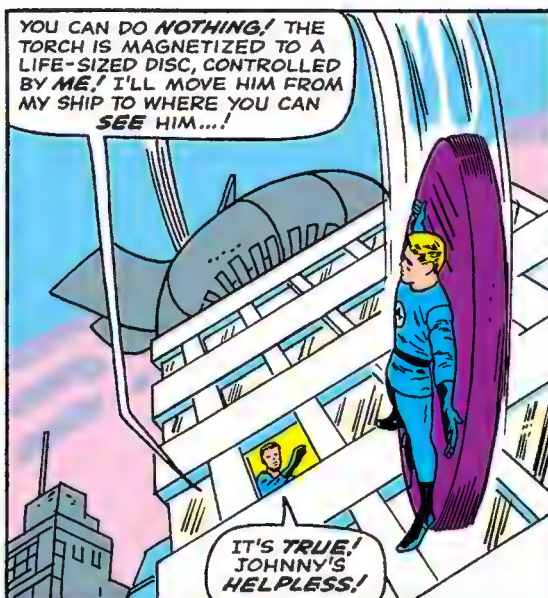
BUT, THEY LOOK SO **CONFIDENT**--AS THOUGH THEY HAVE AN ACE-IN-THE HOLE!



TELL HER, WIZARD! TELL THAT WEAKLING HOW RIGHT SHE IS!

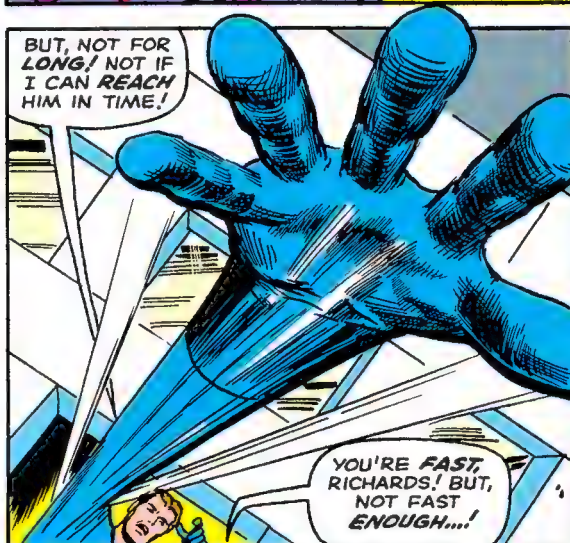
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE TORCH? HE IS MY PRISONER! ALL I NEED DO IS REVERSE MY ANTI-GRAV DISC, AND HE'S DOOMED!

REED! WHAT WILL WE DO??!



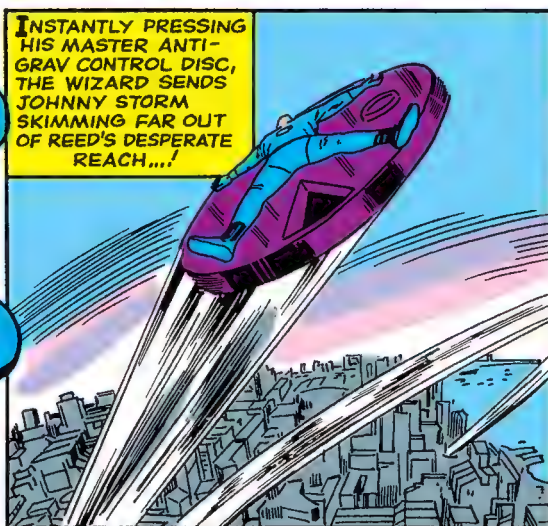
YOU CAN DO NOTHING! THE TORCH IS MAGNETIZED TO A LIFE-SIZED DISC, CONTROLLED BY ME! I'LL MOVE HIM FROM MY SHIP TO WHERE YOU CAN SEE HIM....!

IT'S TRUE! JOHNNY'S HELPLESS!

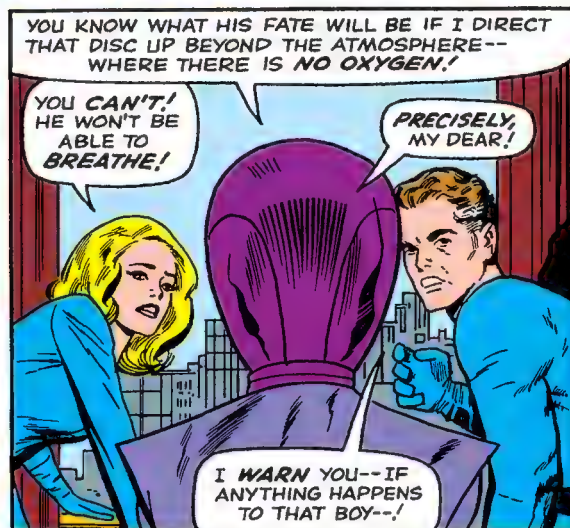


BUT, NOT FOR LONG! NOT IF I CAN REACH HIM IN TIME!

YOU'RE FAST, RICHARDS! BUT, NOT FAST ENOUGH....!



INSTANTLY PRESSING HIS MASTER ANTI-GRAV CONTROL DISC, THE WIZARD SENDS JOHNNY STORM SKIMMING FAR OUT OF REED'S DESPERATE REACH....!



YOU KNOW WHAT HIS FATE WILL BE IF I DIRECT THAT DISC UP BEYOND THE ATMOSPHERE-- WHERE THERE IS NO OXYGEN!

YOU CAN'T! HE WON'T BE ABLE TO BREATHE!

PRECISELY, MY DEAR!

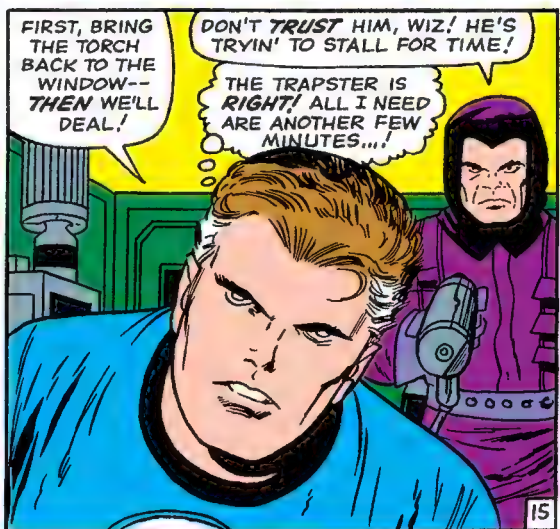
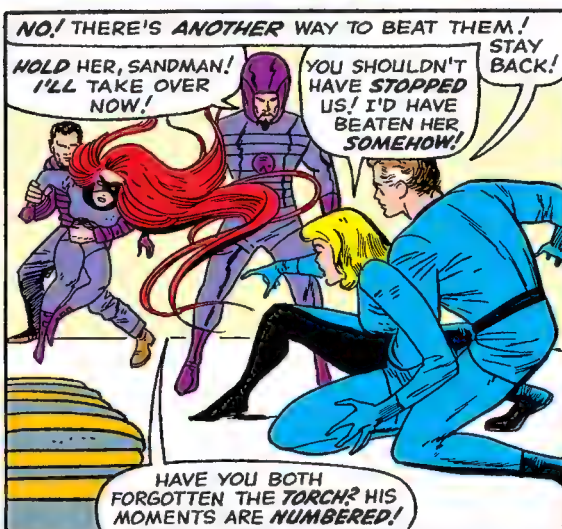
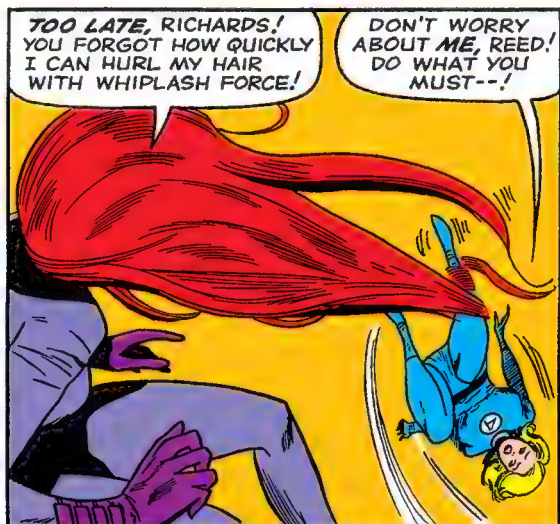
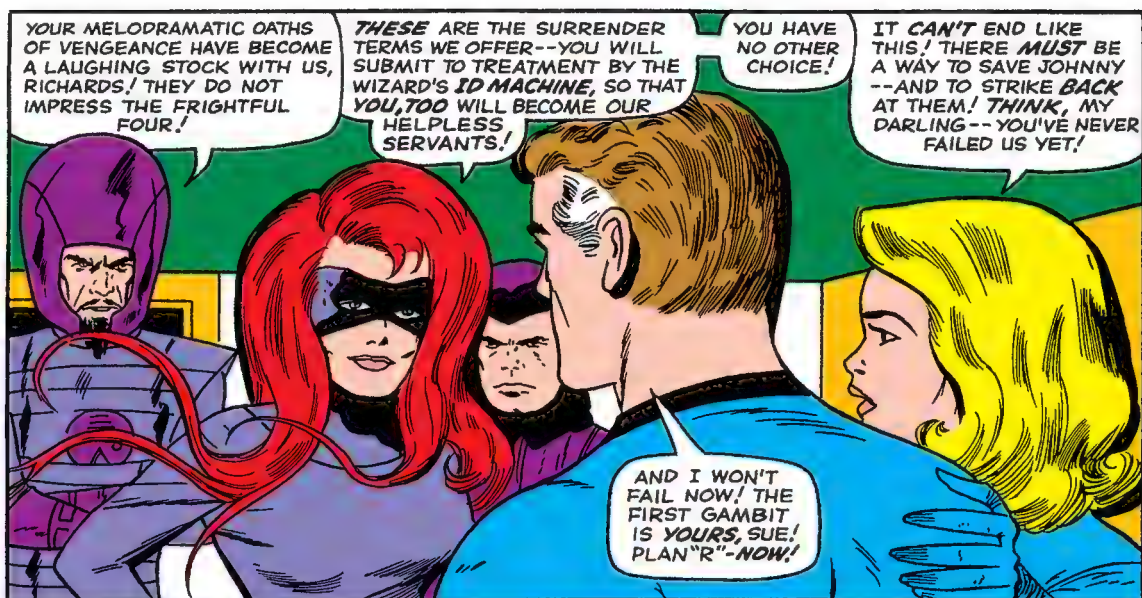
I WARN YOU--IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THAT BOY--!



YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO WARN ANYONE! ALL THAT REMAINS IS YOUR COMPLETE SURRENDER!

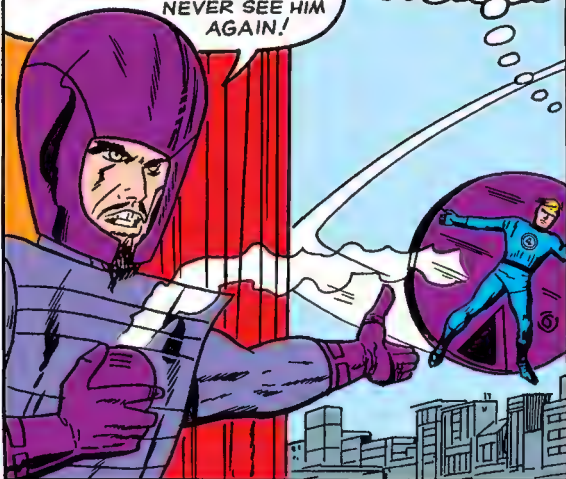
STOP HIM, REED! THEY CAN'T DEFEAT US AGAIN!

THEY WON'T, SUE! I SWEAR IT!

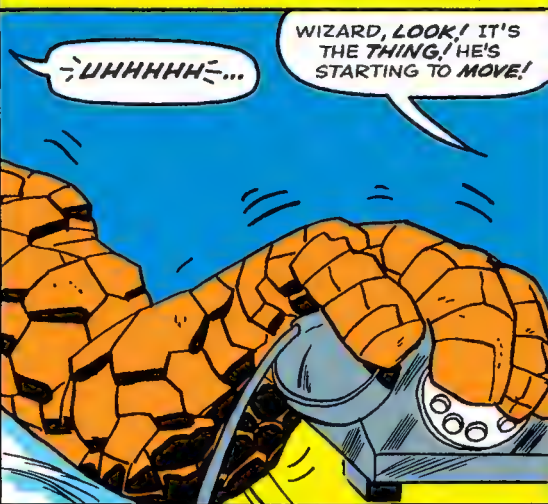


VERY WELL, RICHARDS, I'LL CALL YOUR BLUFF! THERE IS THE TORCH! NOW, YOU HAVE **TEN SECONDS** TO SURRENDER--OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!

IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT--TEN SECONDS ARE ALL I'LL NEED...

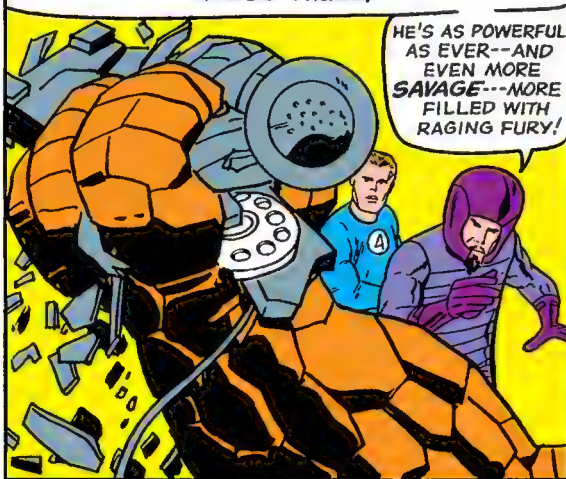


THEN, EXACTLY SEVEN SECONDS LATER, THE ALL-BUT-FORGOTTEN **THING** BEGINS TO STIR, AS A STEEL-SINewed HAND REACHES OUT, GRASPING THE FIRST OBJECT IT ENCOUNTERS...



WIZARD, LOOK! IT'S THE **THING**! HE'S STARTING TO MOVE!

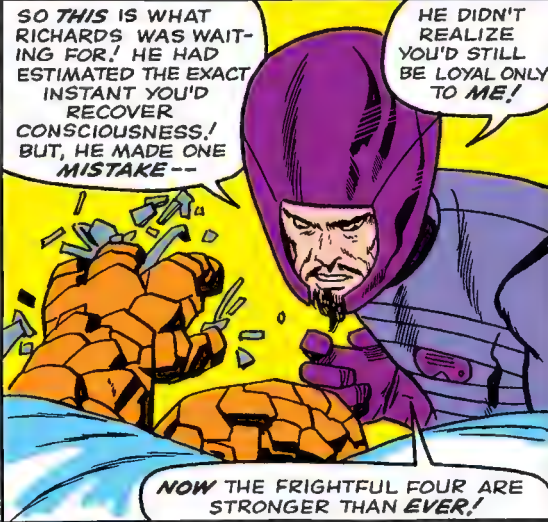
HE CRUSHED THAT ENTIRE TELEPHONE UNIT LIKE AN **EGG-SHELL**!



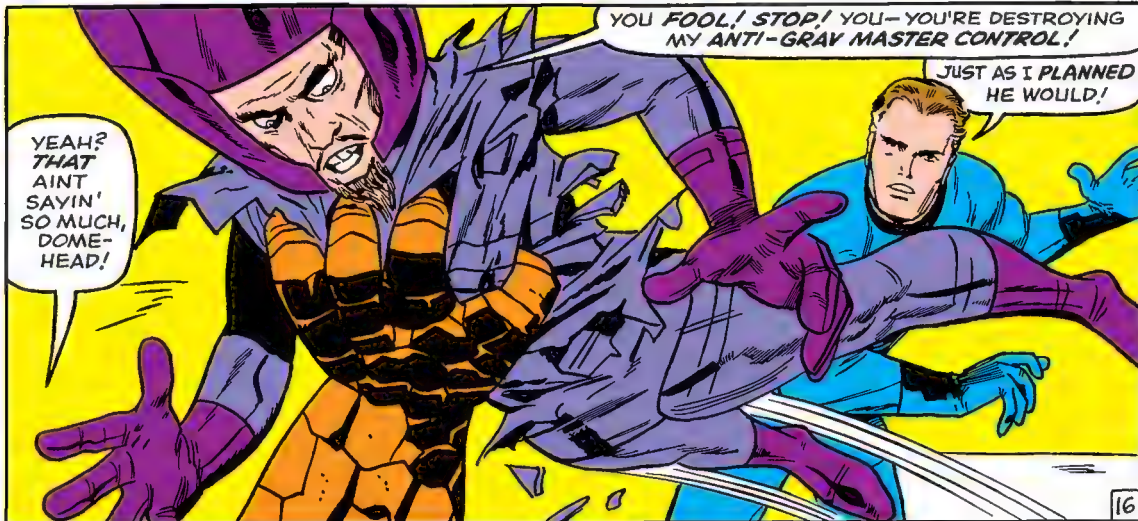
HE'S AS POWERFUL AS EVER--AND EVEN MORE **SAVAGE**--MORE FILLED WITH RAGING FURY!

SO **THIS** IS WHAT RICHARDS WAS WAITING FOR! HE HAD ESTIMATED THE EXACT INSTANT YOU'D RECOVER CONSCIOUSNESS! BUT, HE MADE ONE **MISTAKE**--

HE DIDN'T REALIZE YOU'D STILL BE LOYAL ONLY TO **ME**!



NOW THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR ARE STRONGER THAN EVER!



YOU **FOOL**! STOP! YOU--YOU'RE DESTROYING MY **ANTI-GRAV MASTER CONTROL**!

JUST AS I PLANNED HE WOULD!

YEAH? THAT AINT SAYIN' SO MUCH, DOME-HEAD!

SUDDENLY, THE *THING* FALLS BACK-- INTO ANOTHER COMA-- BUT, HE HAS PROVIDED JUST THE DIVERSION THAT A FIGHTING-MAD, SWIFTLY-STRIKING REED RICHARDS NEEDS!

THE
THING
IS **OUT**
AGAIN!
NOW'S
OUR
CHANCE
TO
FINISH
RICHARDS!
**GET
HIM!**

HOLD THE SANDMAN,
SUE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE
TRAPSTER!

**BUT--WHAT ABOUT JOHNNY? HE'S STILL
MAGNETIZED TO THAT DEADLY DISC!**

**HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT,
DARLING! WITH THE
WIZARD'S MASTER
CONTROL SMASHED,
THE DISC WILL HAVE
LOST ITS POWER!
THE TORCH CAN
FLAME ON AGAIN!**

AND, DIRECTLY OUTSIDE THE THIRTY-FIFTH FLOOR OF THE BAXTER BUILDING, THE EVENT WHICH GREETED OUR EYES PROVES ONCE AGAIN THAT AMONG THE WORLD'S MOST DARING STRATEGISTS, REED RICHARDS IS STILL THE UNCHALLENGED MASTER!

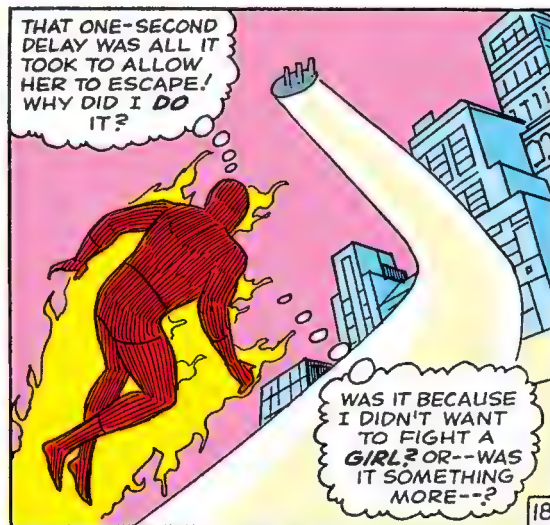
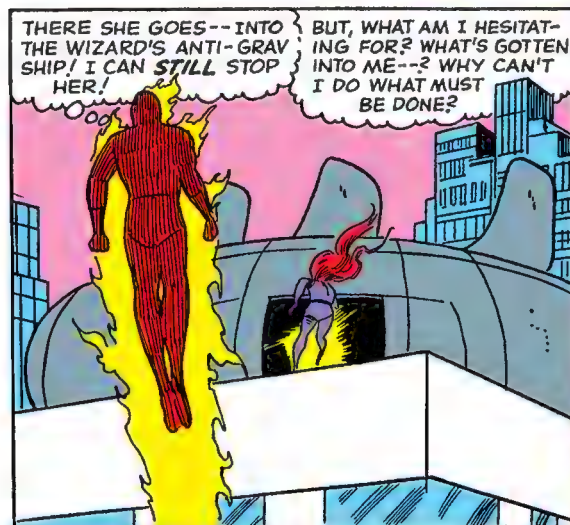
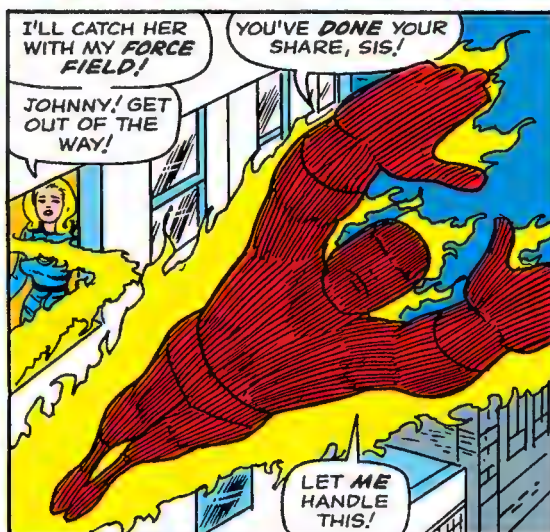
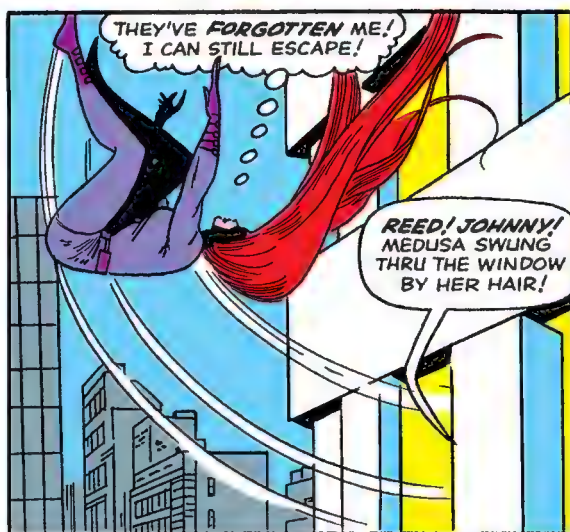
THE DISC LOST ITS POWER! AND
I'VE REGAINED *MINE*! THIS IS
WHAT I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR...

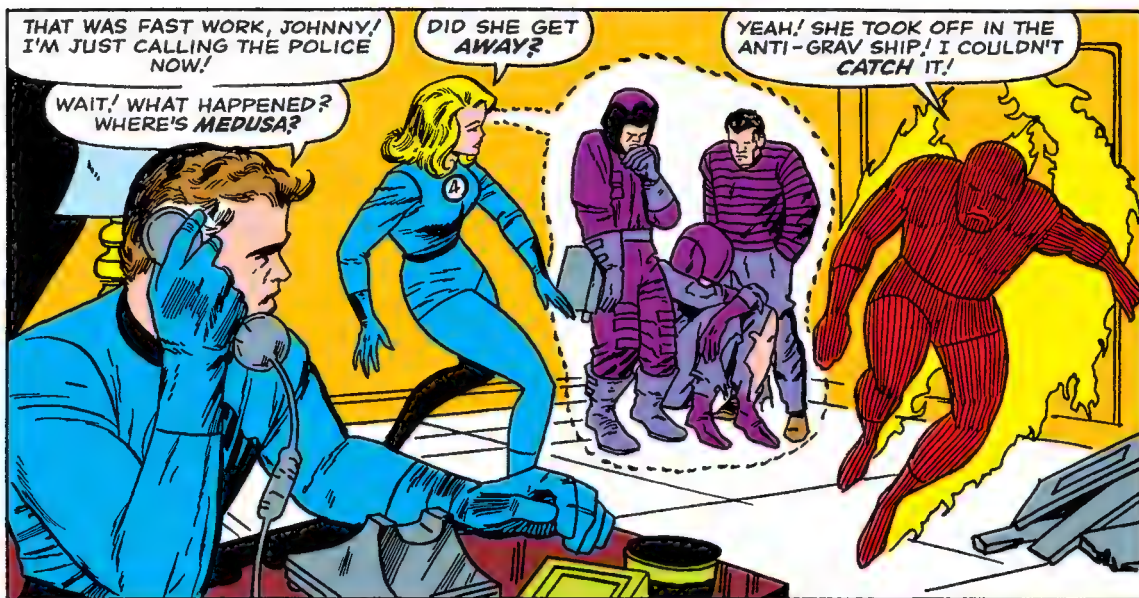
CAN AN UNINVITED GUEST CRASH YOUR LITTLE PARTY, GANG?

YOU CAN RELAX YOUR
FORCE FIELD, SIS! I'LL
KEEP THESE CREEPS
BUSY FOR A WHILE!

JONNNY!
OH, THANK
HEAVENS!

THE **TORCH**,
NOW WE'RE
IN FER IT!





THAT WAS FAST WORK, JOHNNY!
I'M JUST CALLING THE POLICE
NOW!

DID SHE GET
AWAY?

YEAH! SHE TOOK OFF IN THE
ANTI-GRAV SHIP! I COULDN'T
CATCH IT!

WAIT! WHAT HAPPENED?
WHERE'S MEDUSA?

I DON'T UNDER-
STAND, BOY! YOU
HAD TIME
ENOUGH TO REACH
HER BEFORE SHE
COULD ENTER THE
SHIP!

OKAY, OKAY! SO, I GOOFED
FOR ONCE! GET OFF MY
BACK, WILL YA!

DON'T GET RILED, KID!
I THINK I UNDERSTAND!
SHE'S AN EXTREMELY
ATTRACTIVE FEMALE!

LET IT RIDE, HUH?
I DON'T WANNA
TALK ABOUT IT!

SECONDS LATER, AT THE NEIGHBORING POLICE
PRECINCT...

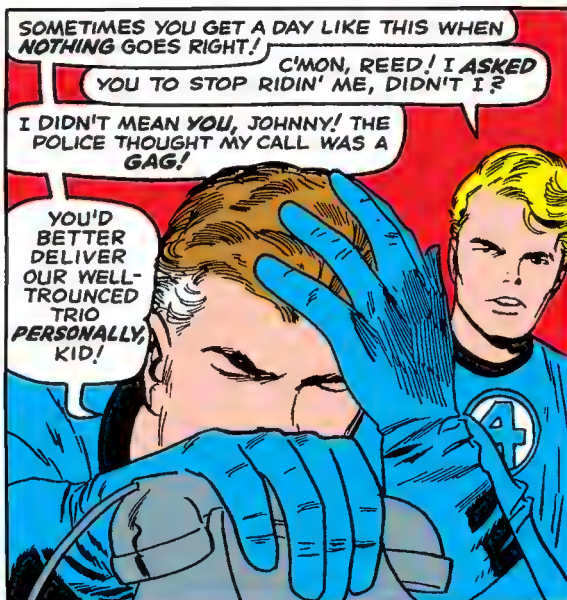
HELLO...
SGT. DONNEGAN,
OF THE 31st!
WHAT'S THE
PROBLEM,
MAC?

HOPE IT'S NOT ANOTHER OF
THOSE CRANK CALLS, SARGE!
THERE'S BEEN A RASH OF
THEM ALL DAY!

WHAT'S THAT?
WOULD YOU
REPEAT WHAT
YOU SAID, SIR?

I SAID I'VE GOT THE FRIGHTFUL
FOUR UNDER WRAPS FOR YOU!
THREE OF THEM, ANYWAY! YOU
CAN PICK THEM UP ANY TIME!

YEAH? NEXT YOU'LL
BE SAYIN' YOU'RE
MR. FANTASTIC!
I'M NOT BUYIN',
SMART GUY!



SOMETIMES YOU GET A DAY LIKE THIS WHEN NOTHING GOES RIGHT!

C'MON, REED! I ASKED YOU TO STOP RIDIN' ME, DIDN'T I?

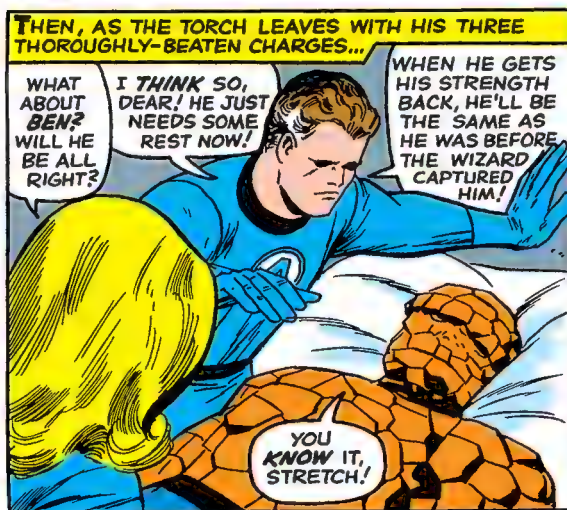
I DIDN'T MEAN YOU, JOHNNY! THE POLICE THOUGHT MY CALL WAS A GAG!

YOU'D BETTER DELIVER OUR WELL-TROUNCED TRIO PERSONALLY, KID!



YOU SURE YOU WANNA TRUST ME WITH THIS JOB--AFTER I FUMBLERED THE BALL WITH MEDUSA?

C'MON, JOHNNY--GET THAT CHIP OFF YOUR SHOULDER, PARTNER! NOBODY'S TRYING TO BUG YOU!



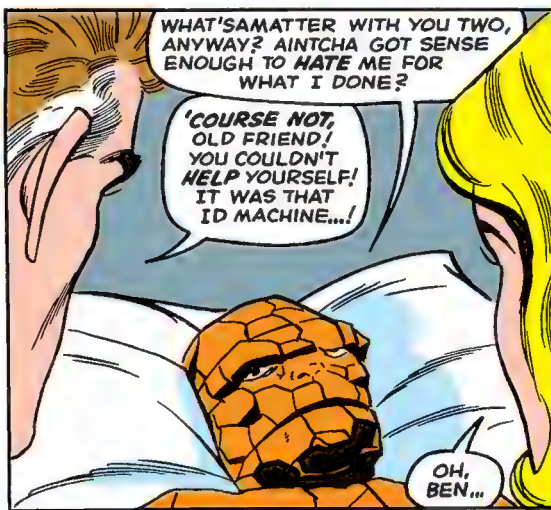
THEN, AS THE TORCH LEAVES WITH HIS THREE THOROUGHLY-BEATEN CHARGES...

WHAT ABOUT BEN? WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT?

I THINK SO, DEAR! HE JUST NEEDS SOME REST NOW!

WHEN HE GETS HIS STRENGTH BACK, HE'LL BE THE SAME AS HE WAS BEFORE THE WIZARD CAPTURED HIM!

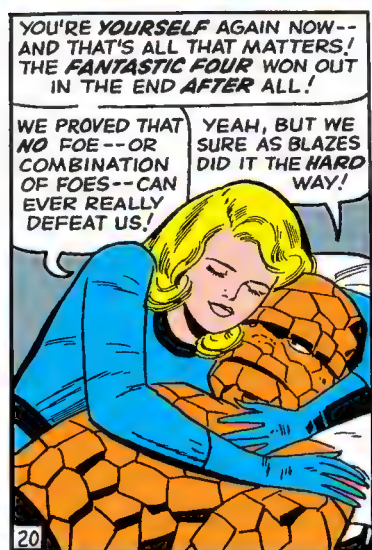
YOU KNOW IT, STRETCH!



WHAT'S A MATTER WITH YOU TWO, ANYWAY? AINTCHA GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO HATE ME FOR WHAT I DONE?

'COURSE NOT, OLD FRIEND! YOU COULDN'T HELP YOURSELF! IT WAS THAT ID MACHINE...

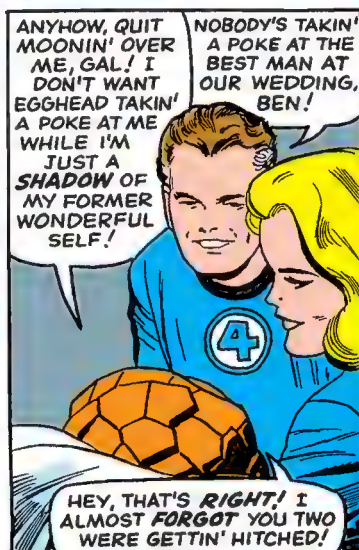
OH, BEN...



YOU'RE YOURSELF AGAIN NOW--AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS! THE FANTASTIC FOUR WON OUT IN THE END AFTER ALL!

WE PROVED THAT NO FOE--OR COMBINATION OF FOES--CAN EVER REALLY DEFEAT US!

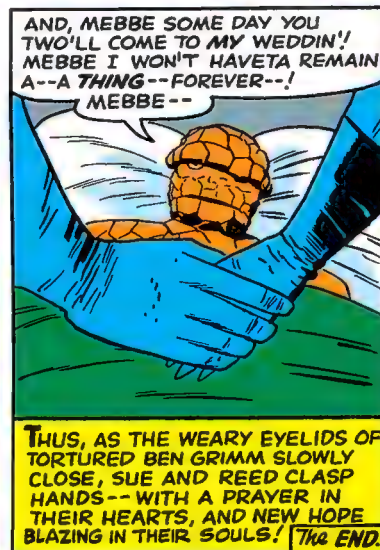
YEAH, BUT WE SURE AS BLAZES DID IT THE HARD WAY!



ANYHOW, QUIT MOONIN' OVER ME, GAL! I DON'T WANT EGGHEAD TAKIN' A POKE AT ME WHILE I'M JUST A SHADOW OF MY FORMER WONDERFUL SELF!

NOBODY'S TAKIN' A POKE AT THE BEST MAN AT OUR WEDDING, BEN!

HEY, THAT'S RIGHT! I ALMOST FORGOT YOU TWO WERE GETTIN' HITCHED!



AND, MEBBE SOME DAY YOU TWO'LL COME TO MY WEDDIN'! MEBBE I WON'T HAVETA REMAIN A--A THING--FOREVER--! MEBBE --

THUS, AS THE WEARY EYELIDS OF TORTURED BEN GRIMM SLOWLY CLOSE, SUE AND REED CLASP HANDS--WITH A PRAYER IN THEIR HEARTS, AND NEW HOPE BLAZING IN THEIR SOULS! *The END.*

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

44
NOV

IND.

Fantastic FOUR

THE
GENTLEMAN'S
NAME IS

“GORGON!”

OR

WHAT A WAY
TO SPEND A
HONEYMOON!



MARVEL
POP
ART 12¢
PRODUCTIONS

THE FABULOUS F.F. LEARN THAT MARRIAGE IS NO GUARANTOR OF PEACE AND QUIET!

"THE GENTLEMAN'S NAME IS
GORGON!"

OR "WHAT A
WAY TO SPEND
A HONEYMOON!"

DREAMED UP BY:
STAN LEE
SKETCHED DOWN BY:
JACK KIRBY
INKED IN BY:
JOE SINNOTT
LETTERED AROUND
BY: **S. ROSEN**



HERE'S THE SHORTEST
INTRODUCTION ON RECORD:
"MR. AND MRS. REED RICHARDS
HAVE SET UP HOUSEKEEPING
AT THE BAXTER BUILDING."
—
THERE! HOPE WE
DIDN'T BORE YOU!



"STRETCHO"



"SWEETUMS"

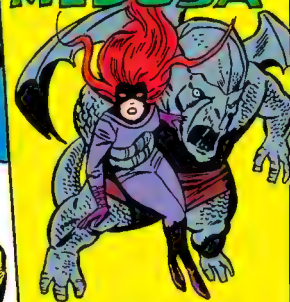


"BLUE EYES"



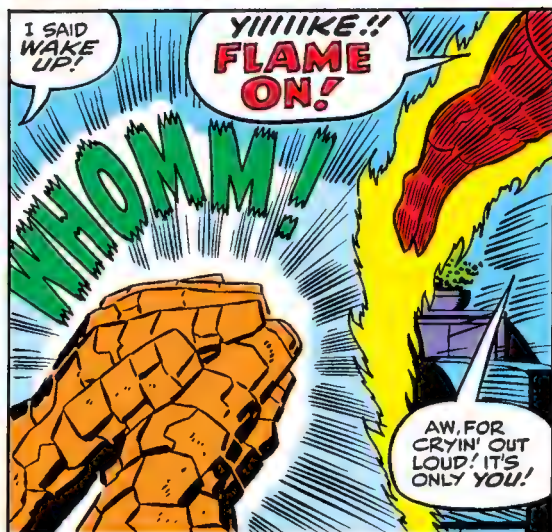
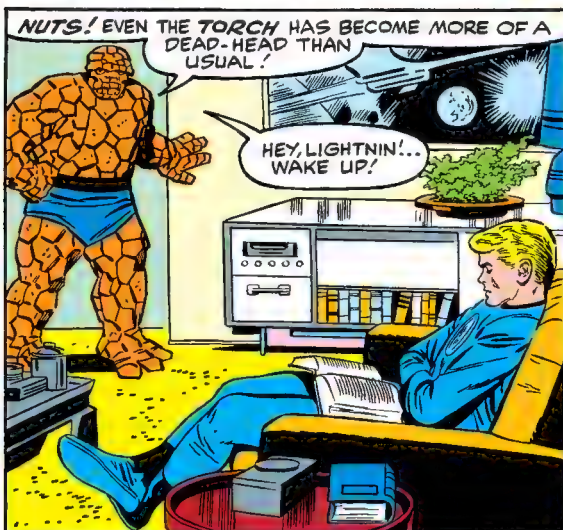
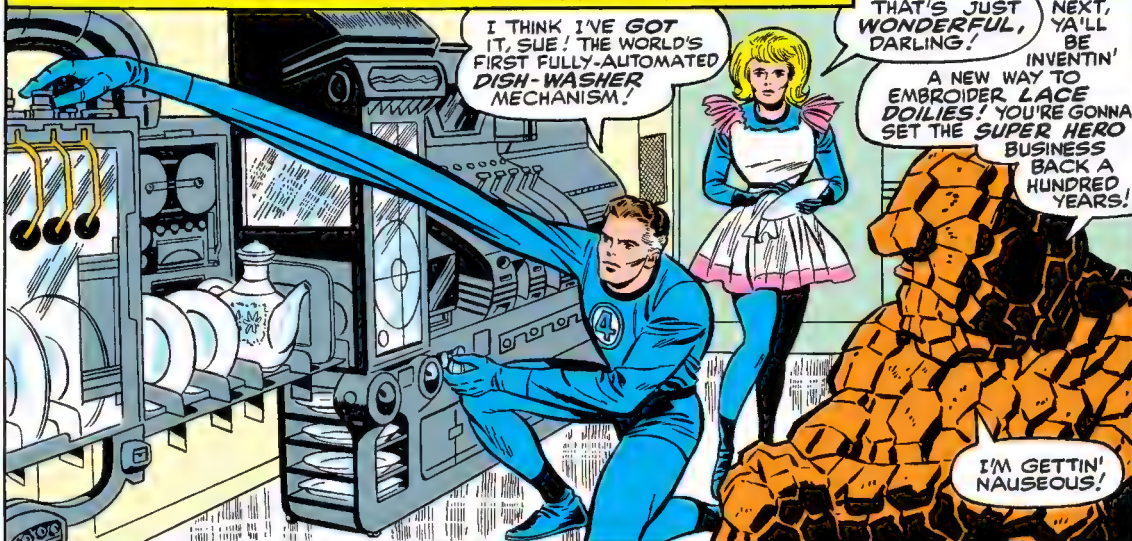
"MATCH-HEAD"

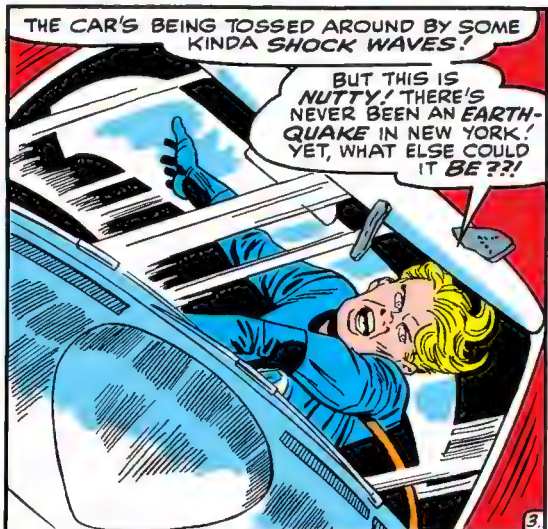
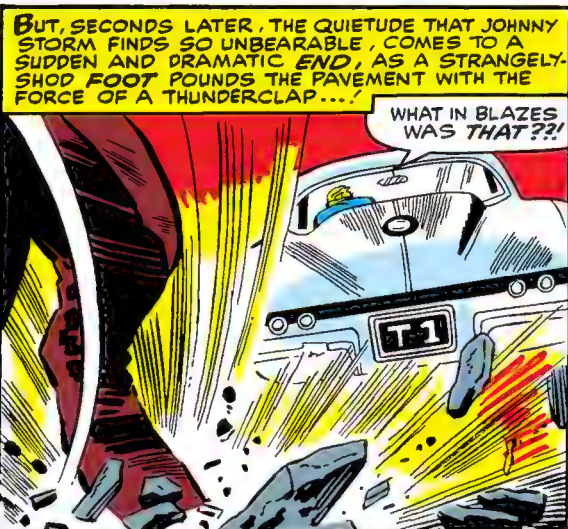
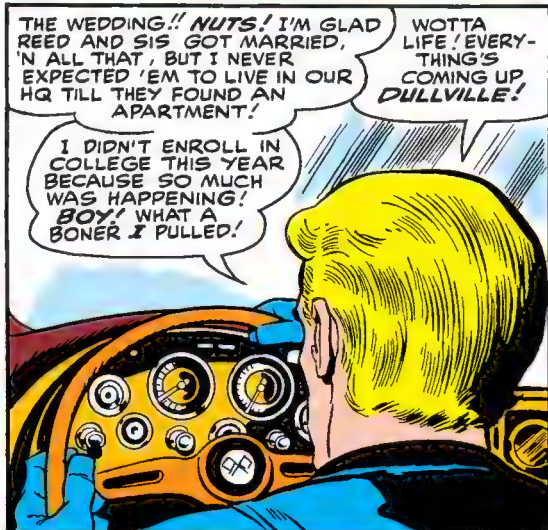
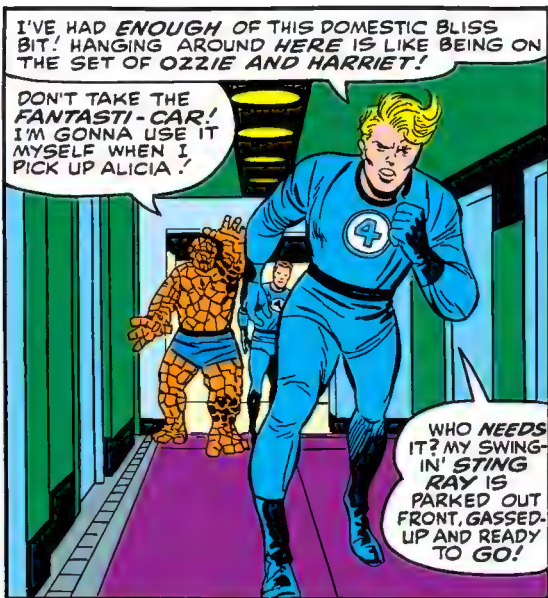
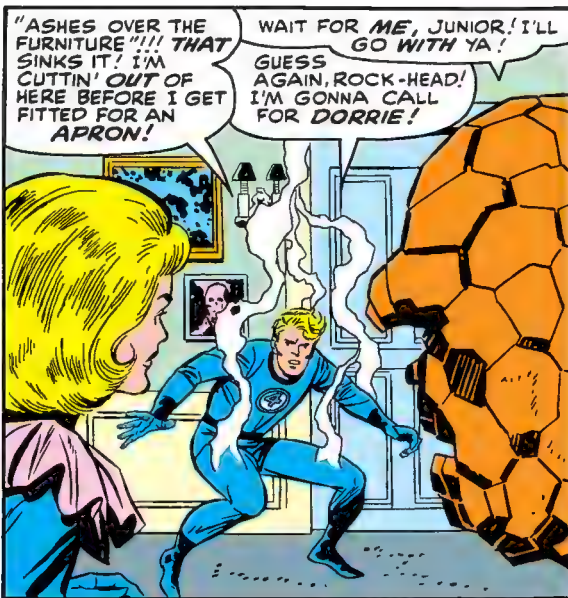
REINTRODUCING:
**MADAM
MEDUSA**

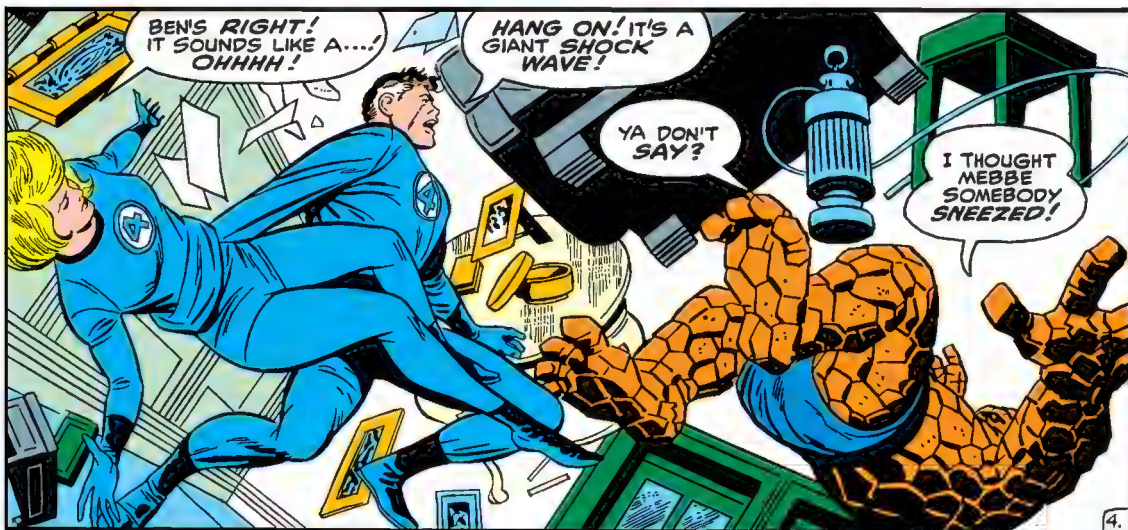
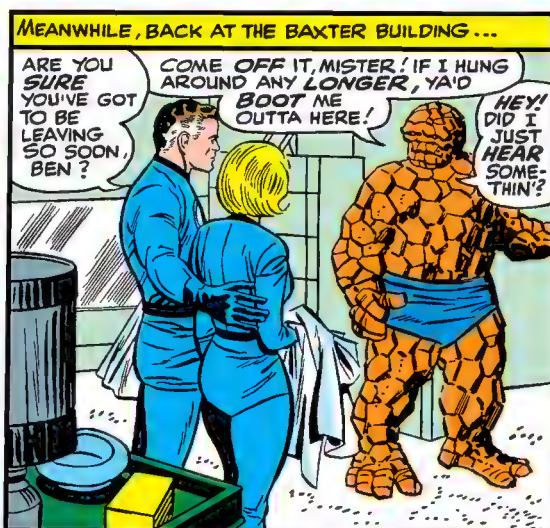
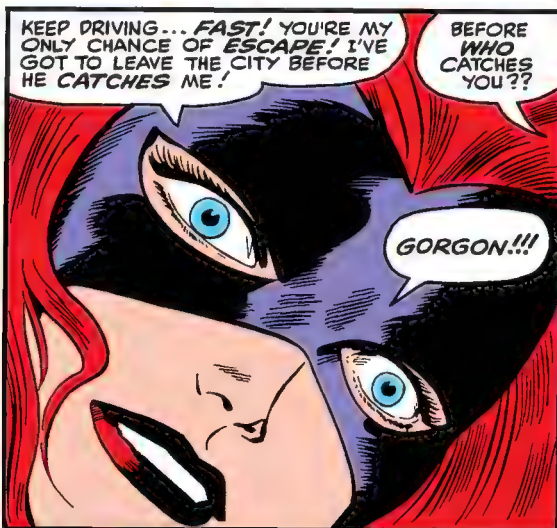
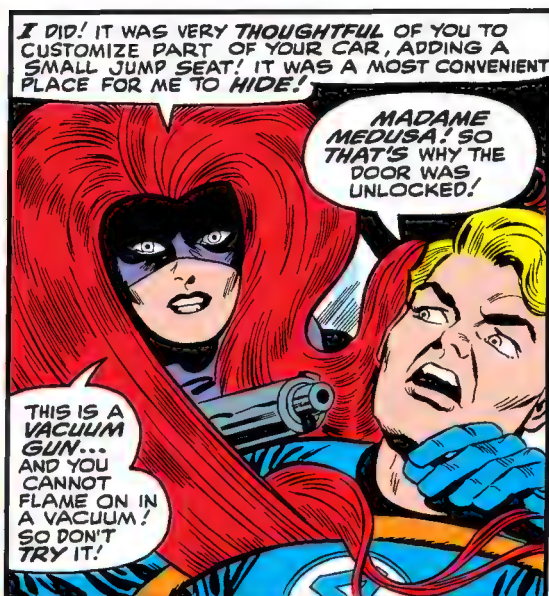
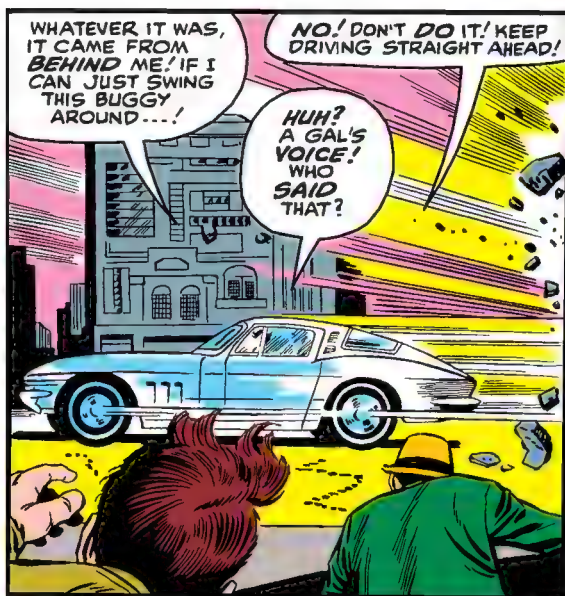


And
THE EVER-DELIGHTFUL
**DRAGON
MAN!**

WHAT WOULD MAKE ONE OF THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC GENIUSES IN THE WORLD WASTE HALF A DAY TRYING TO MODIFY A SET OF KITCHEN APPLIANCES?? **MARRIAGE**, THAT'S WHAT!





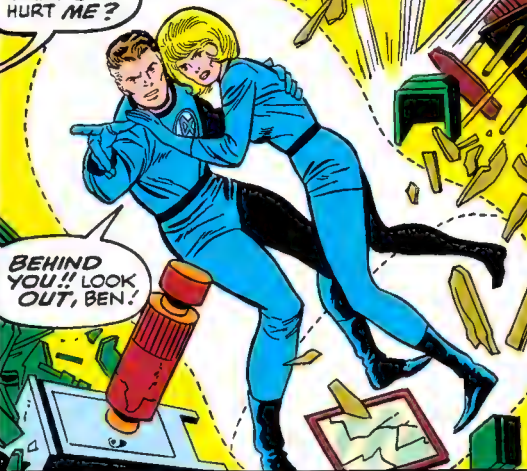


ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE UNCANNY SHOCK WAVES CONTINUE! SHOCK WAVES WHICH INCREDIBLY FEEL AS THOUGH ...

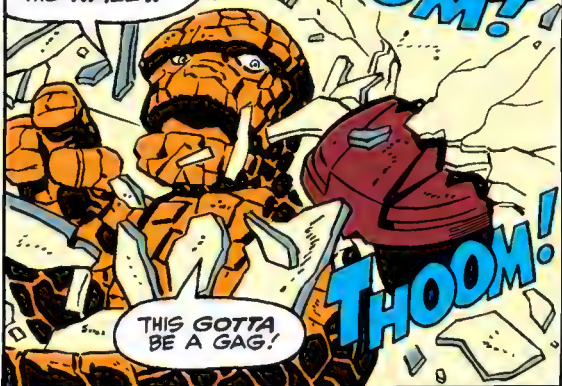


BEN! COME CLOSER SO I CAN THROW MY PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD AROUND YOU, TOO!

NAH! SAVE IT FOR STRETCHO! WHAT CAN HURT ME?

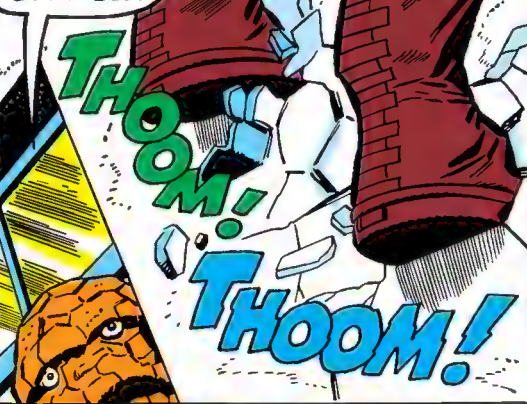


A COUPLE O'CRAZY-LOOKIN' FEET... WALKIN' UP THE SIDE OF THE BUILDIN'... POKIN' RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL!!

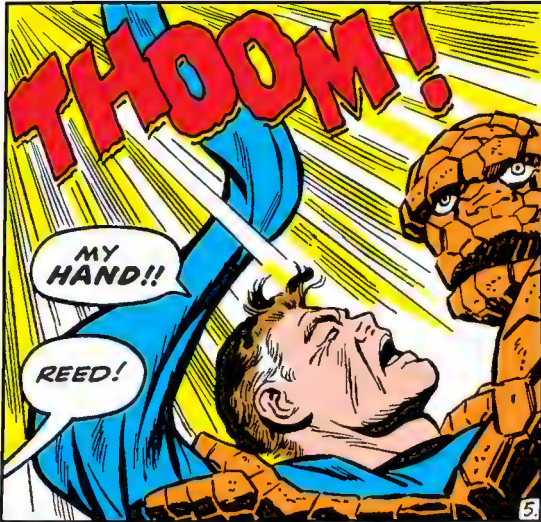
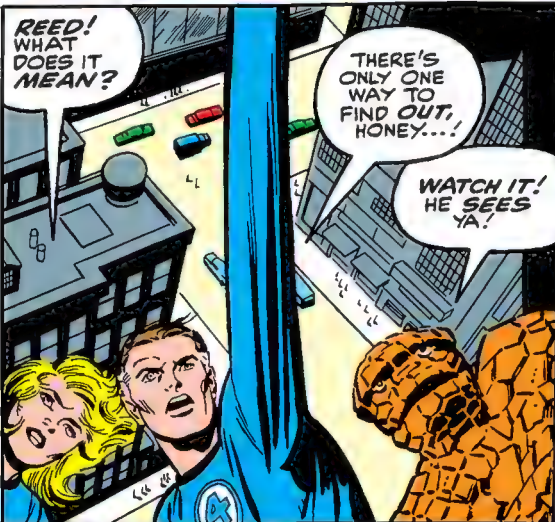


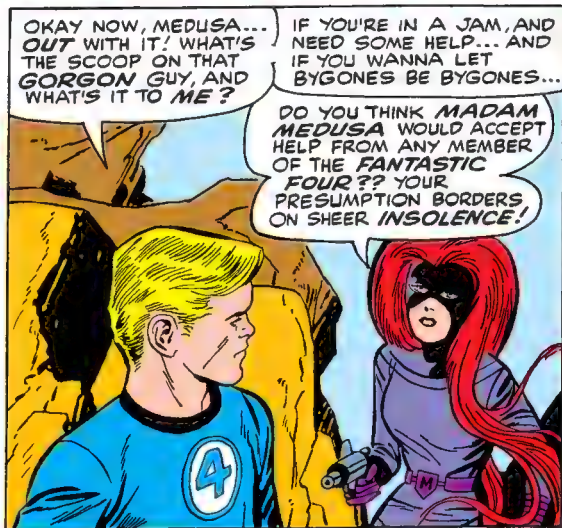
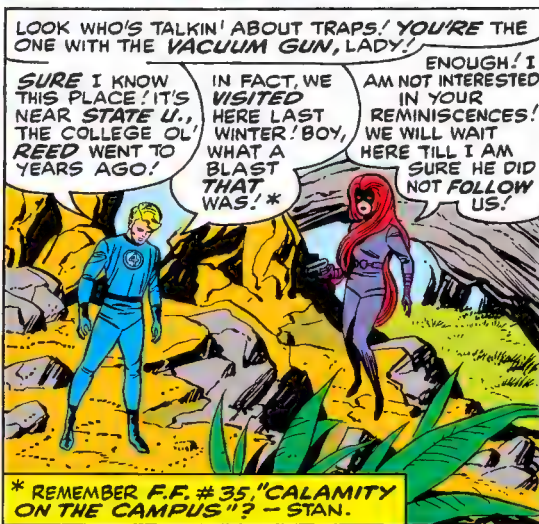
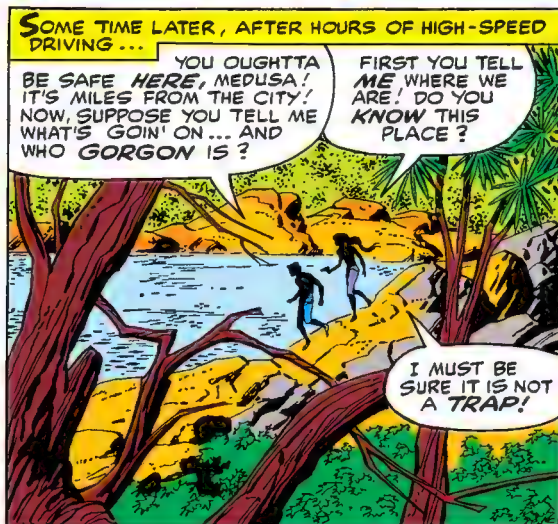
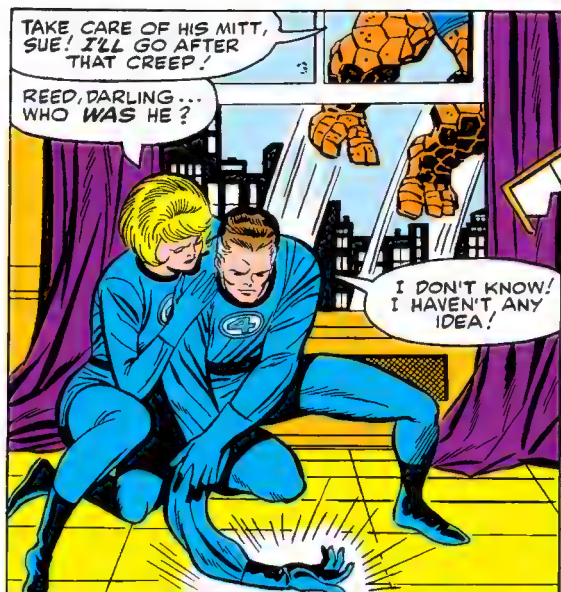
BUT, IT IS NO GAG!

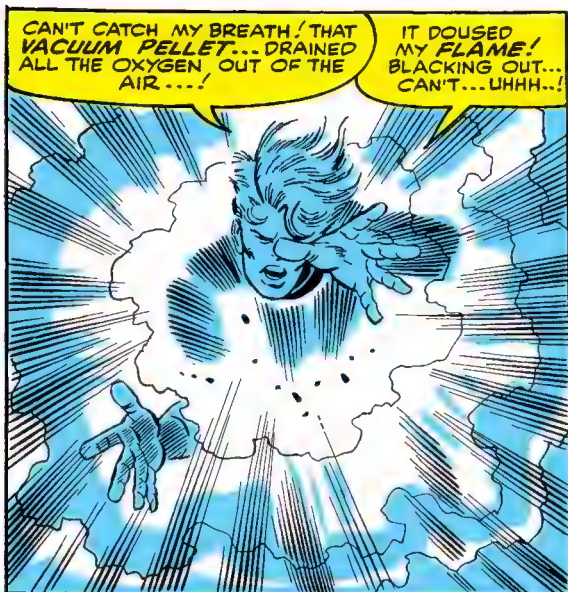
STRETCHO! C'MERE! THIS YA GOTTA SEE!



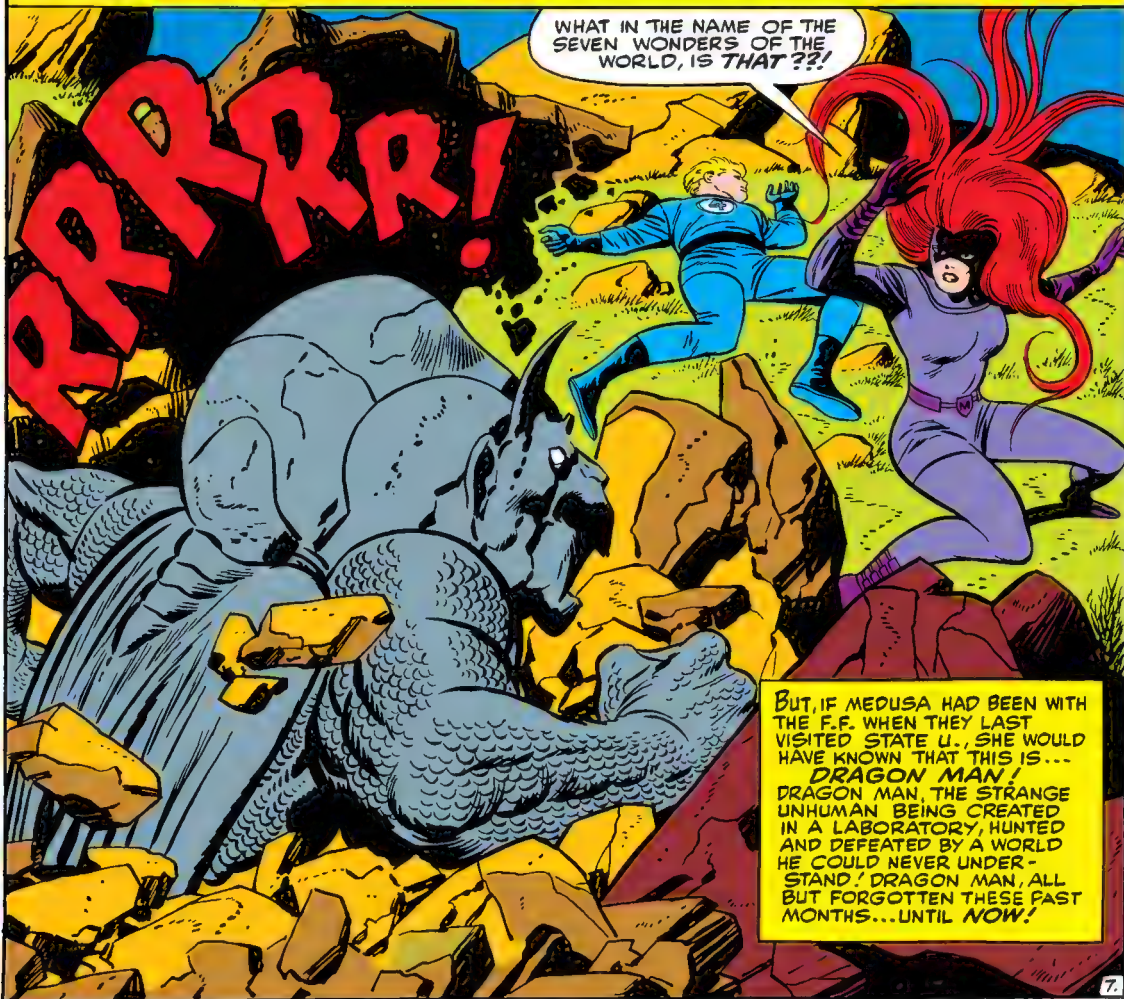
REED! WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

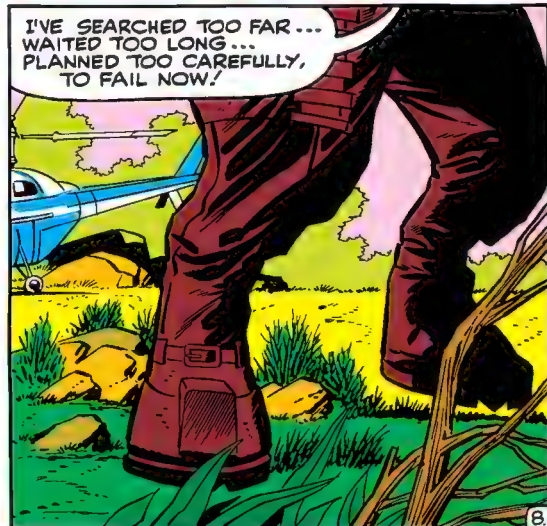
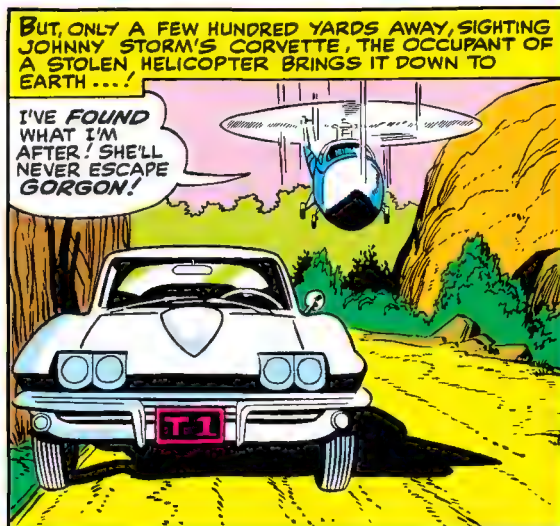


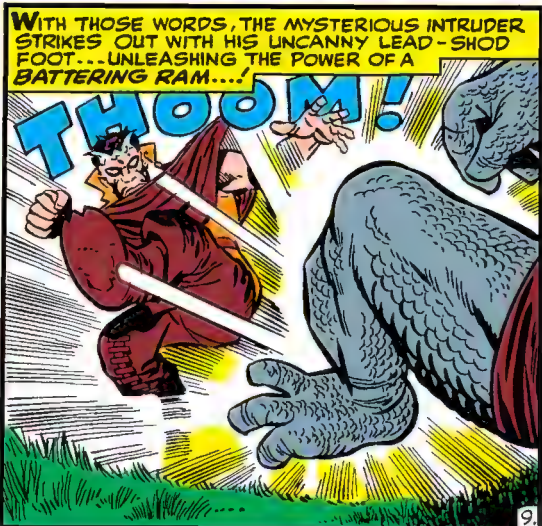
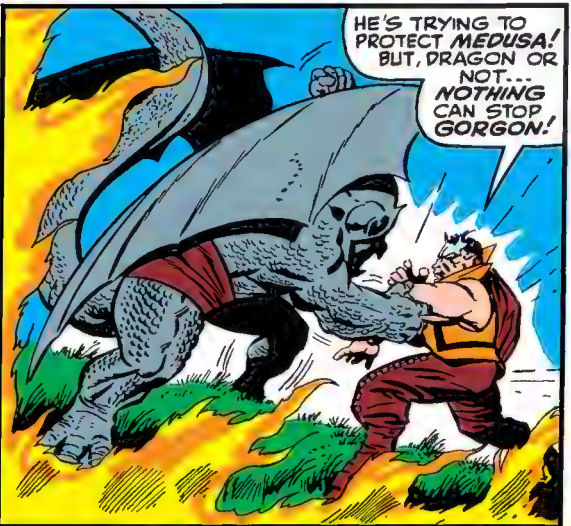
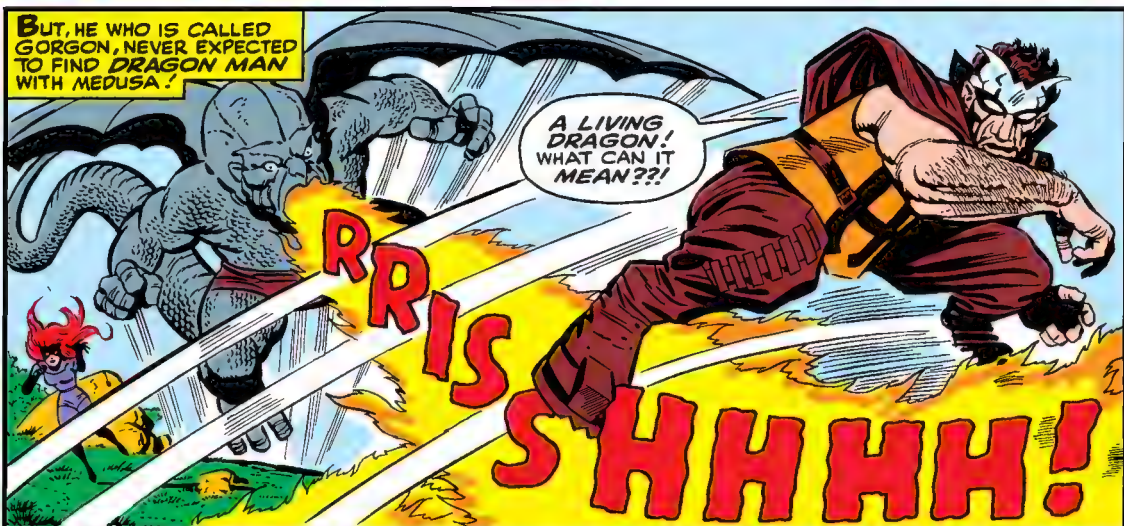
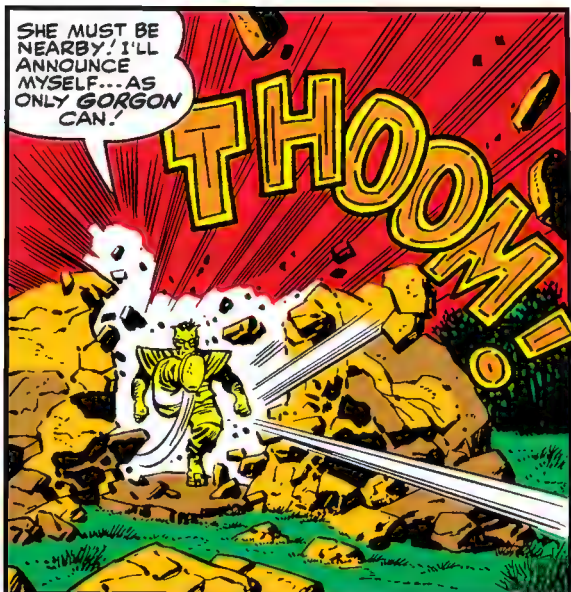


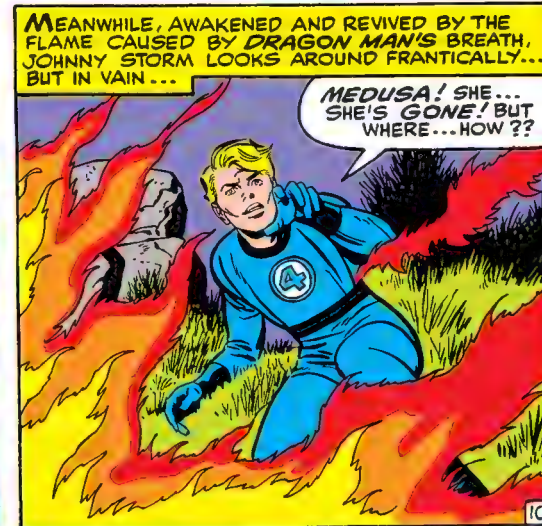
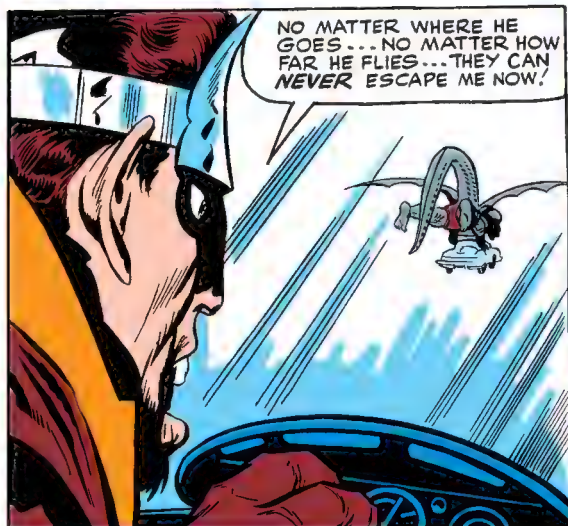
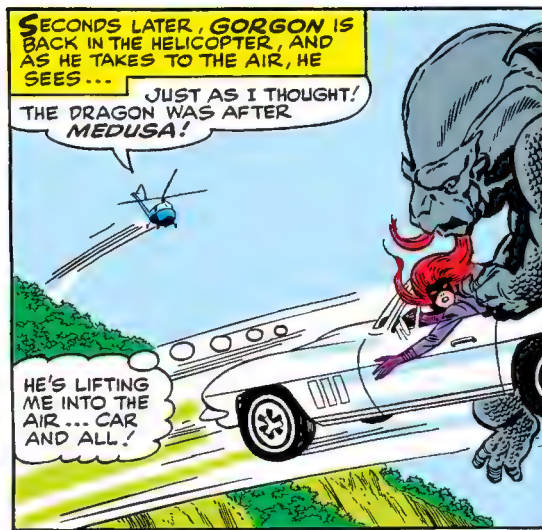
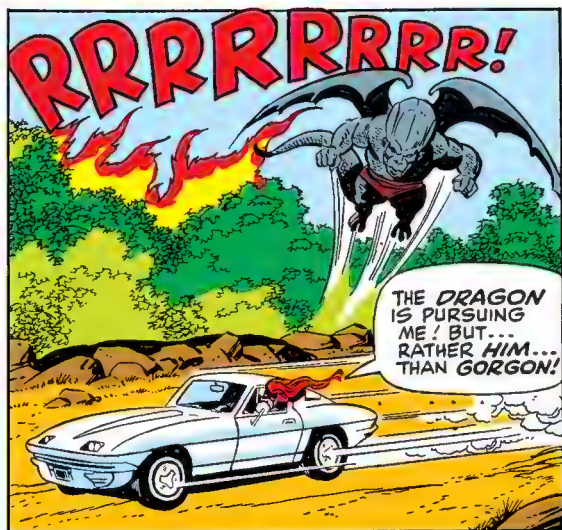


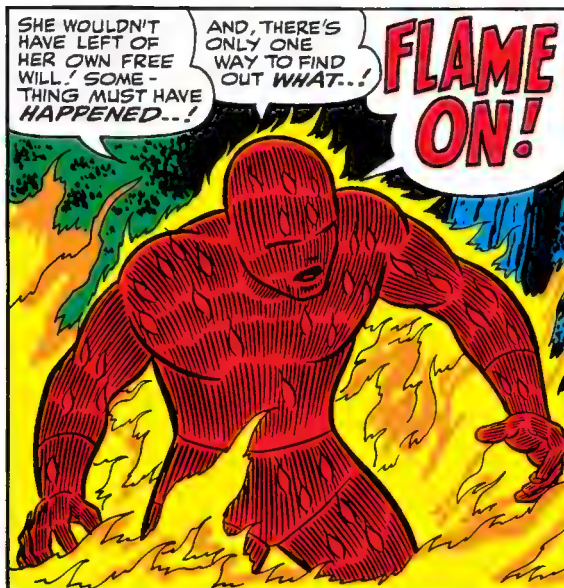
BUT THEN, AS HAPPENS SO OFTEN, AT THE MOST UNEXPECTED TIMES... A CAPRICIOUS FATE TAKES A HAND! DUE TO THE CHANGE IN SURFACE TEMPERATURE, CAUSED BY THE TORCH'S FLAME-OUT, A CREATURE WHO HAD BEEN SLUMBERING BENEATH THE SURFACE IS RUDELY AWAKENED, AND THEN...











SHE WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT OF HER OWN FREE WILL! SOME THING MUST HAVE HAPPENED...

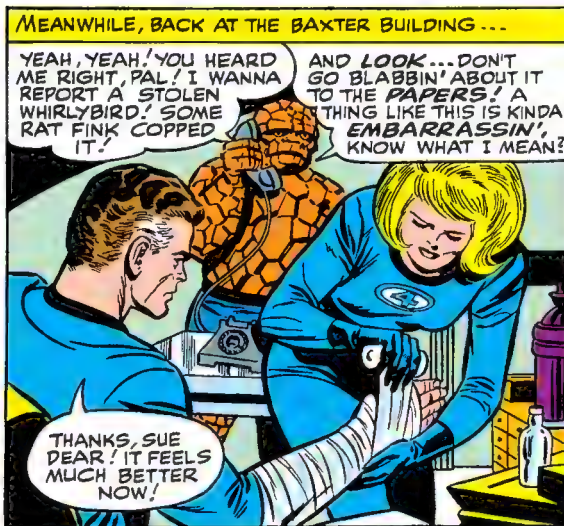
AND, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT WHAT...!

FLAME ON!



FIRST, I'LL DOUSE THE FIRE BY ABSORBING THE FLAMES INTO MYSELF... AND THEN, I'LL SEARCH FOR MEDUSA!

AND, IF I CAN'T FIND HER, I'D BETTER CONTACT REED! WHATEVER IS GOIN' ON HERE, IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE A JOB FOR THE WHOLE F.F.!

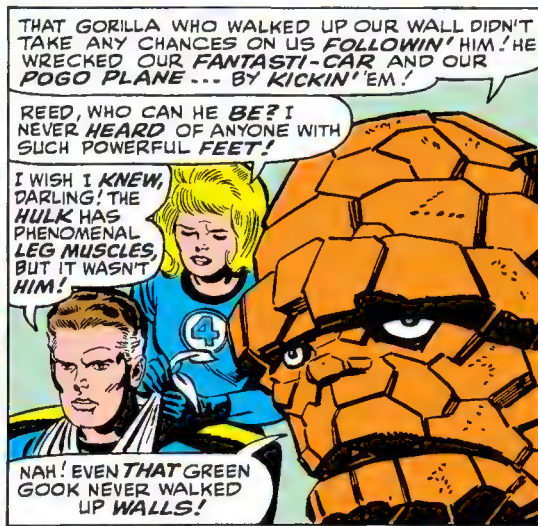


MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE BAXTER BUILDING...

YEAH, YEAH! YOU HEARD ME RIGHT, PAL! I WANNA REPORT A STOLEN WHIRLYBIRD! SOME RAT FINK COPPED IT!

AND LOOK... DON'T GO BLABBIN' ABOUT IT TO THE PAPERS! A THING LIKE THIS IS KINDA EMBARRASSIN', KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

THANKS, SUE DEAR! IT FEELS MUCH BETTER NOW!

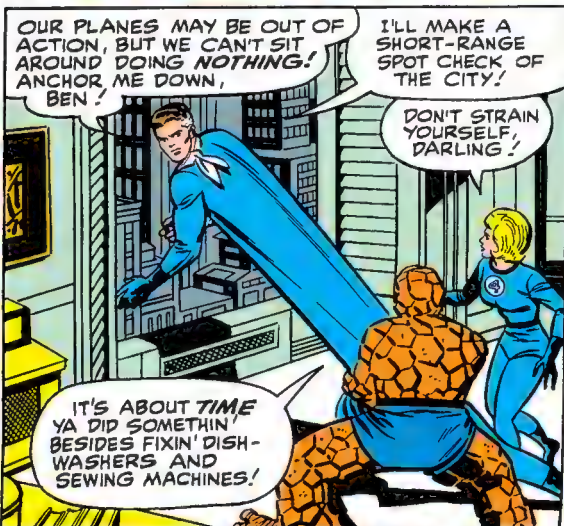


THAT GORILLA WHO WALKED UP OUR WALL DIDN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES ON US FOLLOWIN' HIM! HE WRECKED OUR FANTASTI-CAR AND OUR POGO PLANE... BY KICKIN' EM!

REED, WHO CAN HE BE? I NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE WITH SUCH POWERFUL FEET!

I WISH I KNEW, DARLING! THE HULK HAS PHENOMENAL LEG MUSCLES, BUT IT WASN'T HIM!

NAH! EVEN THAT GREEN GOOK NEVER WALKED UP WALLS!

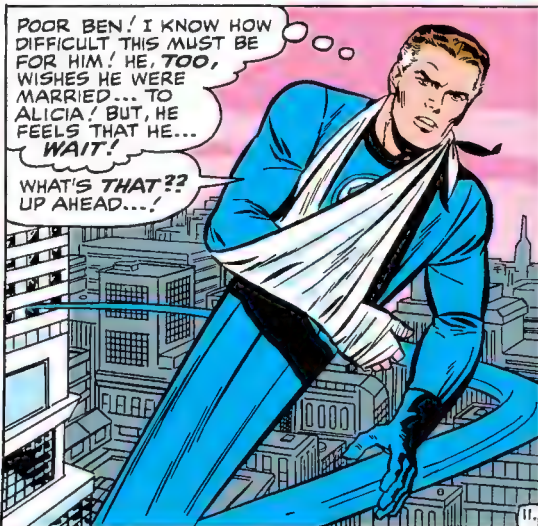


OUR PLANES MAY BE OUT OF ACTION, BUT WE CAN'T SIT AROUND DOING NOTHING! ANCHOR ME DOWN, BEN!

I'LL MAKE A SHORT-RANGE SPOT CHECK OF THE CITY!

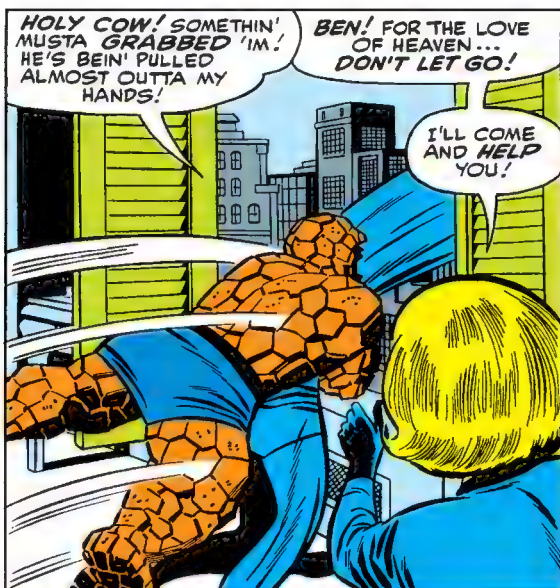
DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF, DARLING!

IT'S ABOUT TIME YA DID SOMETHIN' BESIDES FIXIN' DISH-WASHERS AND SEWING MACHINES!



POOR BEN! I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT THIS MUST BE FOR HIM! HE, TOO, WISHES HE WERE MARRIED... TO ALICIA! BUT, HE FEELS THAT HE... WAIT!

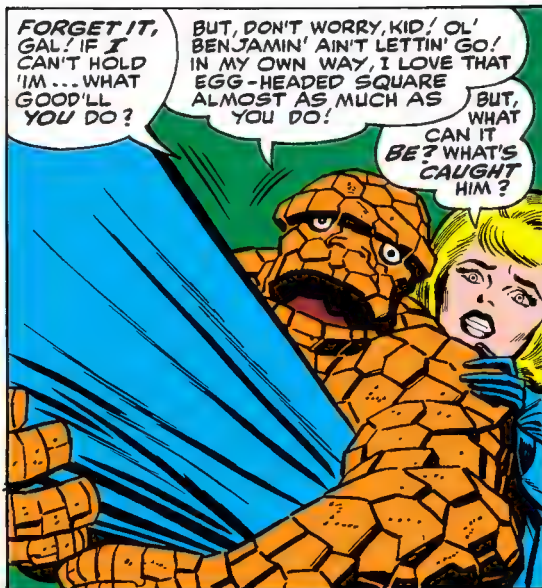
WHAT'S THAT?? UP AHEAD...!



HOLY COW! SOMETHIN' MUSTA GRABBED 'IM! HE'S BEIN' PULLED ALMOST OUTTA MY HANDS!

BEN! FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN... DON'T LET GO!

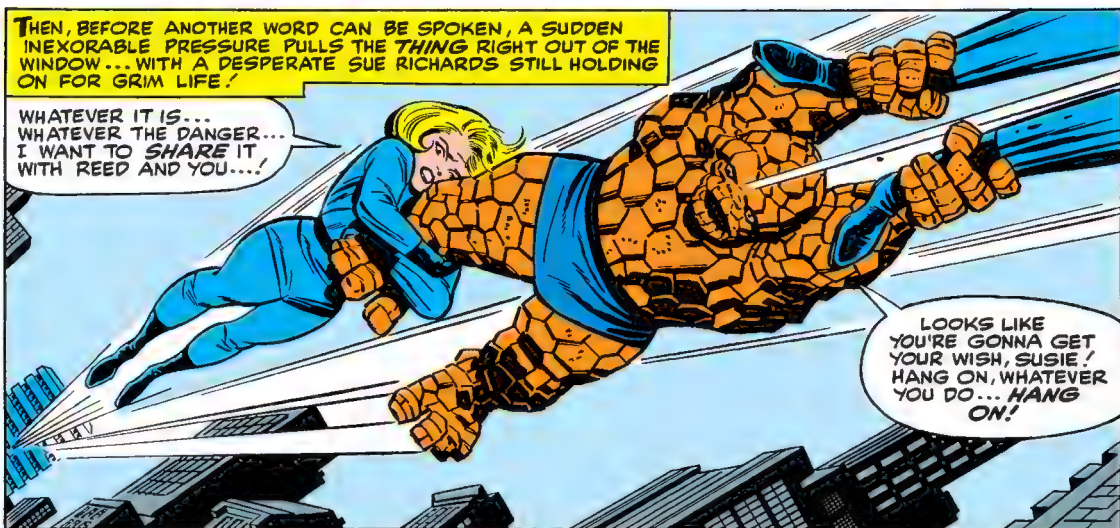
I'LL COME AND HELP YOU!



FORGET IT, GAL! IF I CAN'T HOLD 'IM... WHAT GOOD'LL YOU DO?

BUT, DON'T WORRY, KID! OL' BENJAMIN! AIN'T LETTIN' GO! IN MY OWN WAY, I LOVE THAT EGG-HEADED SQUARE ALMOST AS MUCH AS YOU DO!

BUT, WHAT CAN IT BE? WHAT'S CAUGHT HIM?



THEN, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE SPOKEN, A SUDDEN INEXORABLE PRESSURE PULLS THE THING RIGHT OUT OF THE WINDOW... WITH A DESPERATE SUE RICHARDS STILL HOLDING ON FOR GRIM LIFE!

WHATEVER IT IS... WHATEVER THE DANGER... I WANT TO SHARE IT WITH REED AND YOU...!

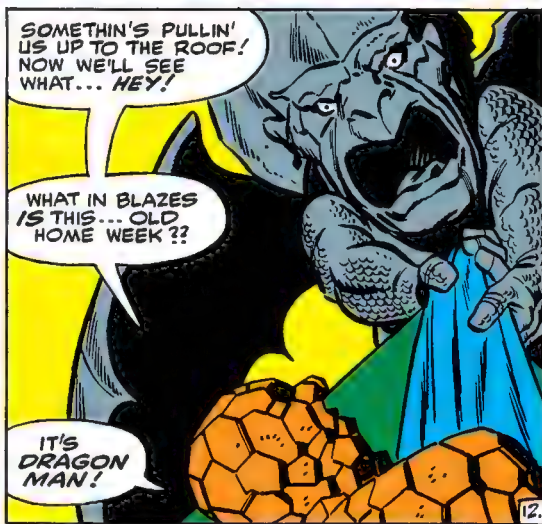
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET YOUR WISH, SUSIE! HANG ON, WHATEVER YOU DO... HANG ON!



WE'RE GONNA HIT THIS BLAMED WALL! DON'T LET GO! I'LL CUSHION THE SHOCK FOR YA!

I'M NOT AFRAID, BEN... HONEST!

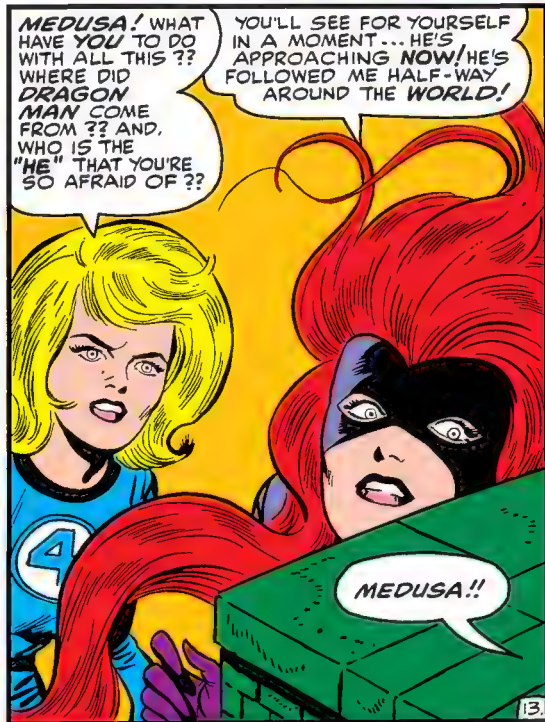
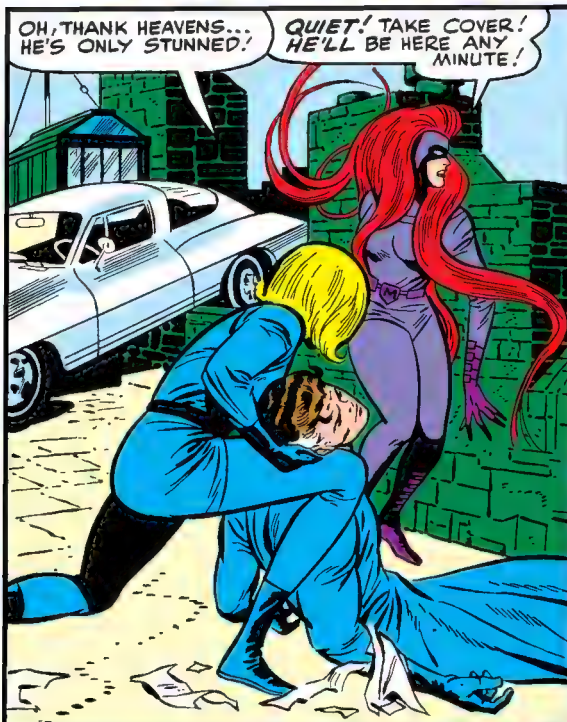
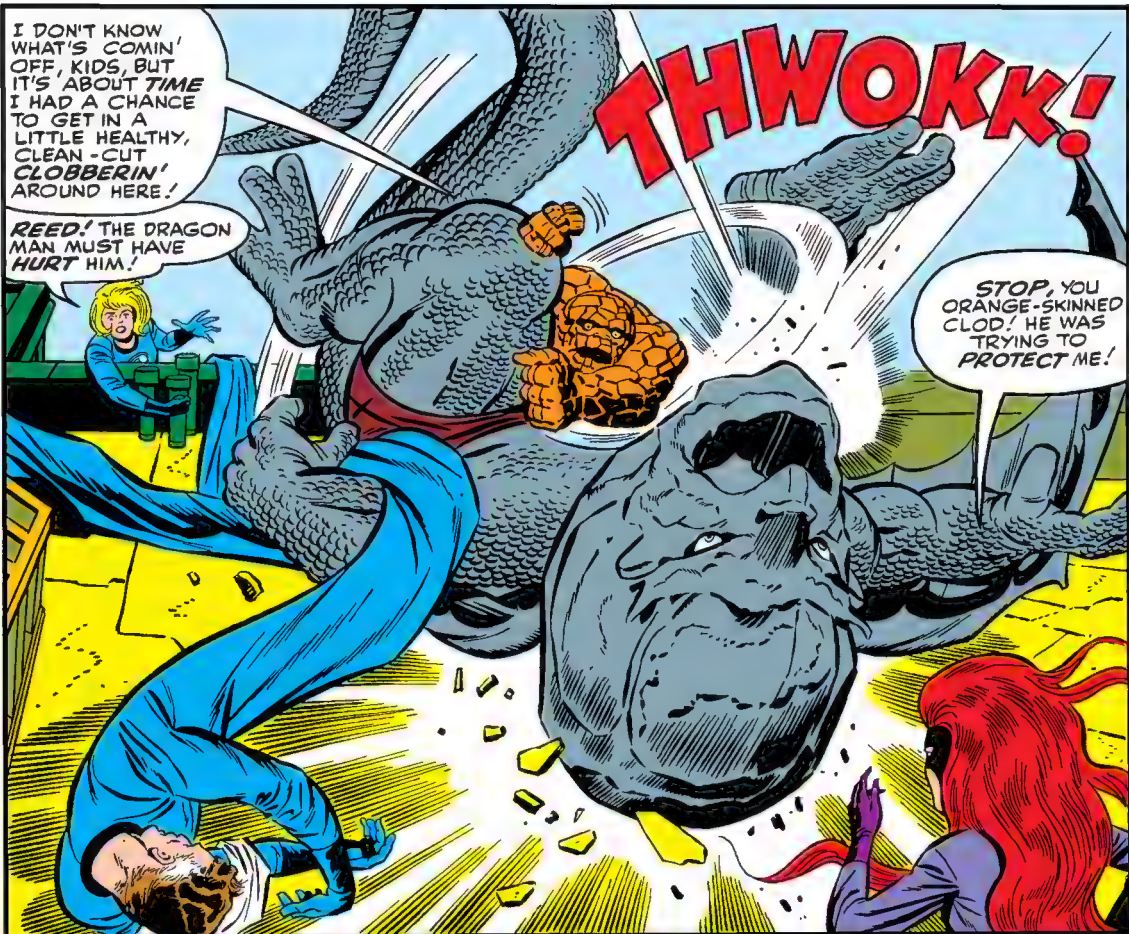
YOU AIN'T? WISH I COULD SAY THAT!

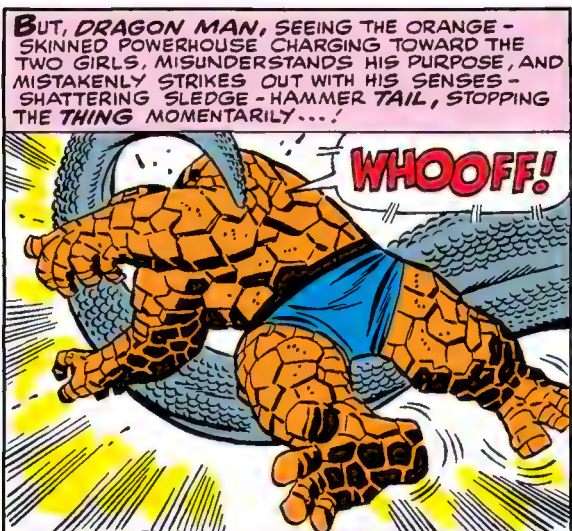
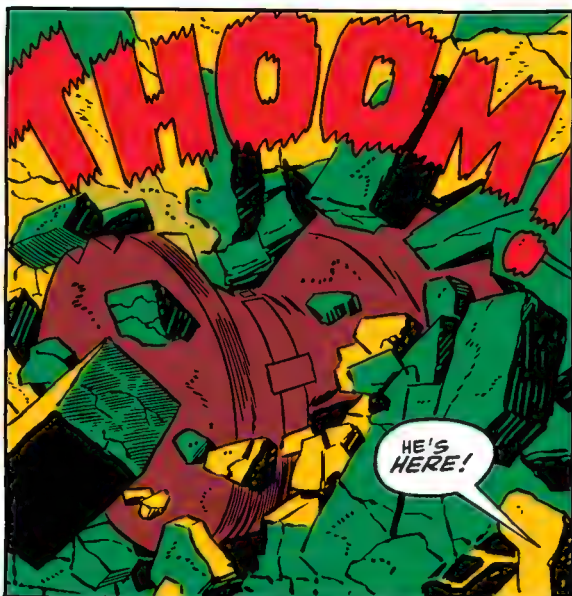


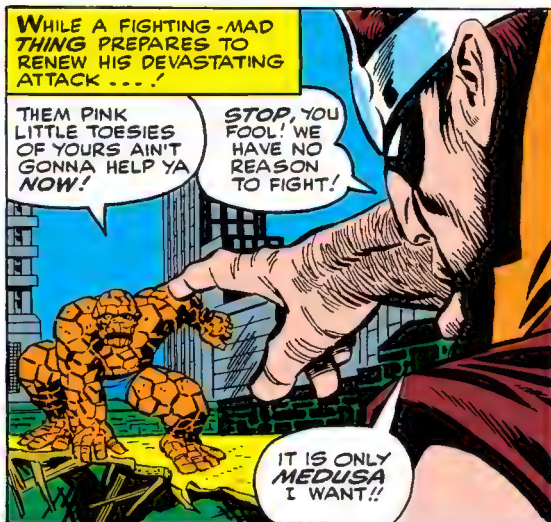
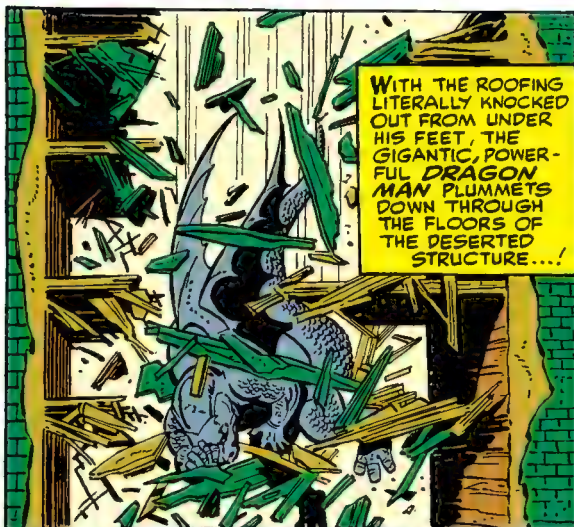
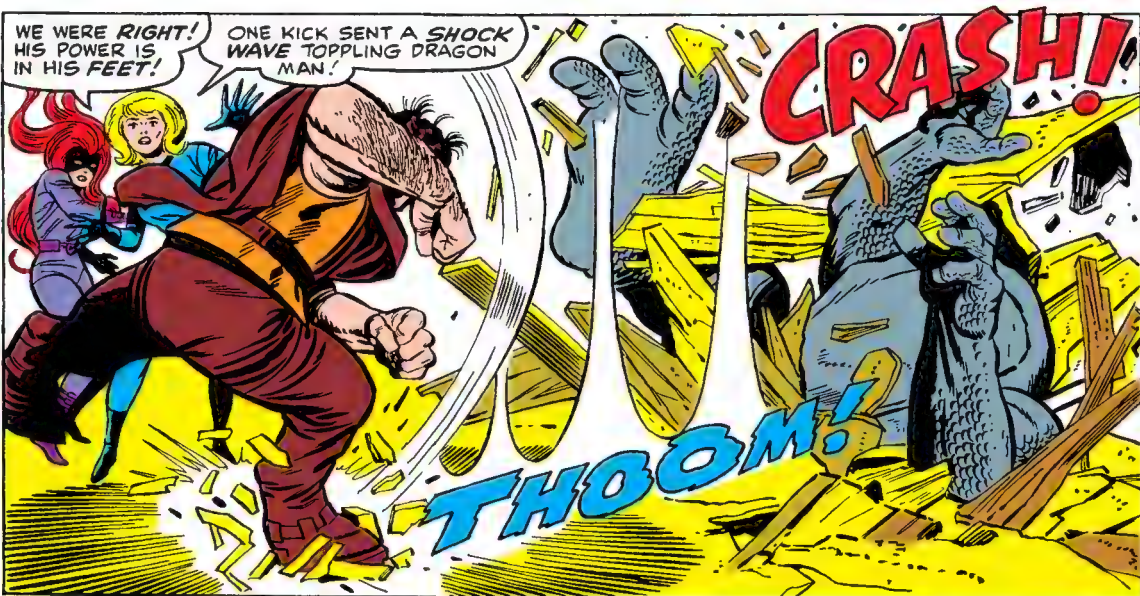
SOMETHIN'S PULLIN' US UP TO THE ROOF! NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT... HEY!

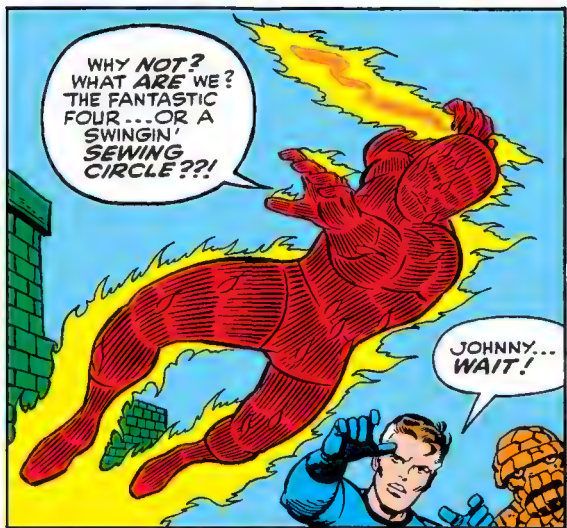
WHAT IN BLAZES IS THIS... OLD HOME WEEK??

IT'S DRAGON MAN!

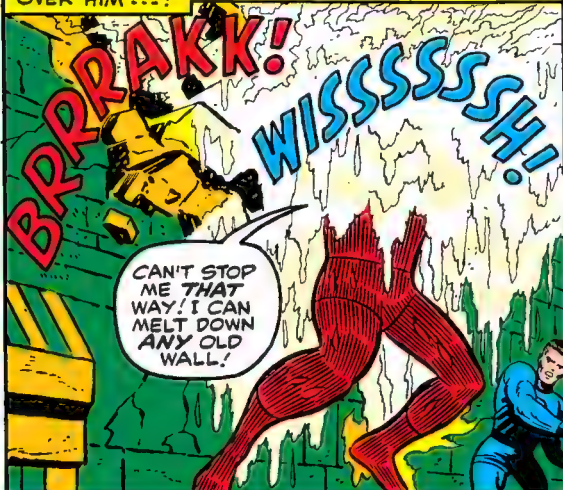






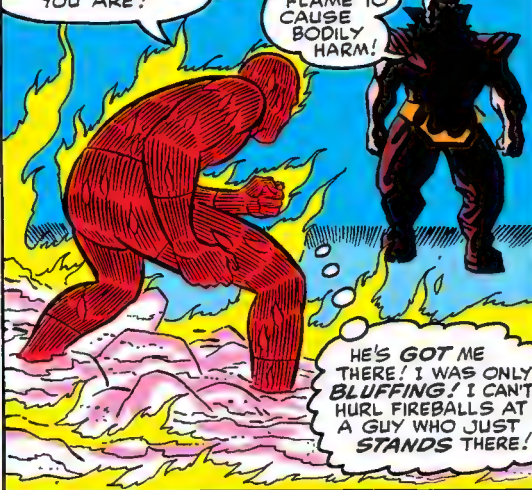


INCREDIBLY, THE MAN CALLED GORGON DIRECTS THE SHOCK WAVE OF HIS EAR-SHATTERING KICK SO THAT IT STRIKES THE WALL DIRECTLY BEHIND THE HUMAN TORCH, CAUSING IT TO CRUMBLE OVER HIM...

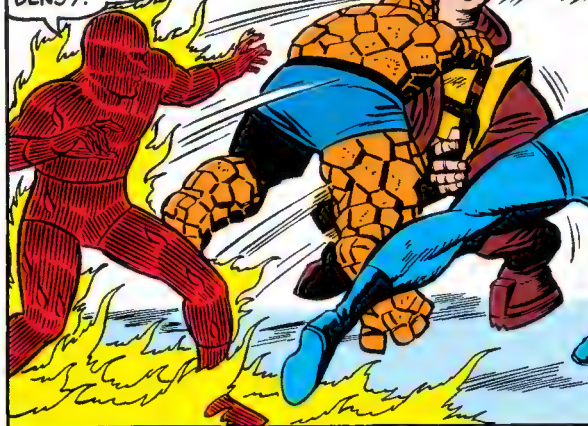


AND NOW THAT I KNOW HOW HARD YOU CAN KICK... LET'S FIND OUT HOW FIREPROOF YOU ARE!

YOU DON'T FRIGHTEN ME! I KNOW YOU ARE PLEDGED NEVER TO USE YOUR FLAME TO CAUSE BODILY HARM!



I GOT NEWS FOR YA, GORGON! I NEVER TOOK ANY PLEDGES NOT TO HURT NOBODY!
ATTA BOY, BENJY!



IT'S NO GOOD! EVEN THE THING CANNOT STOP HIM!

GORGON WILL EASILY BREAK AWAY FROM HIM!



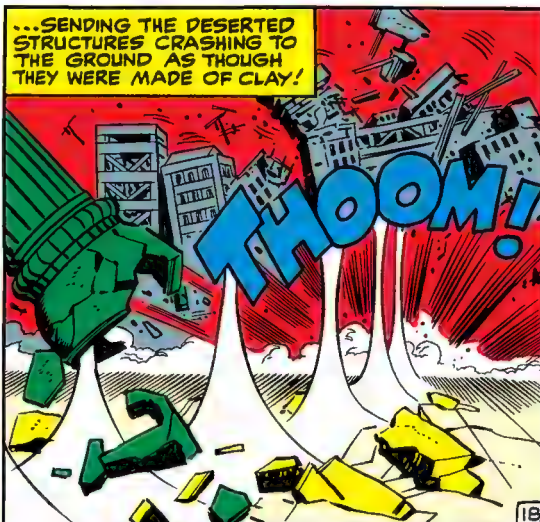
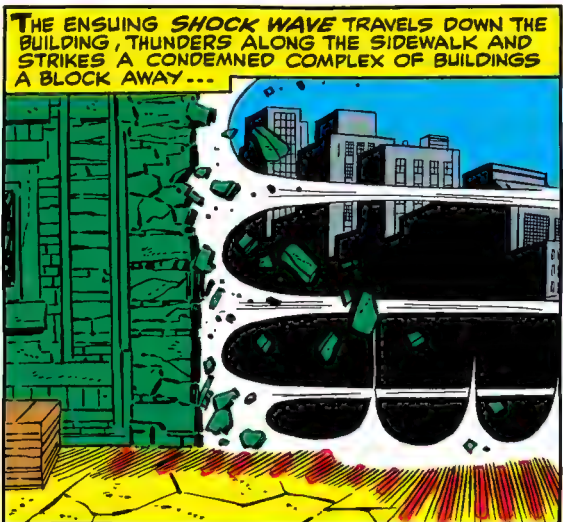
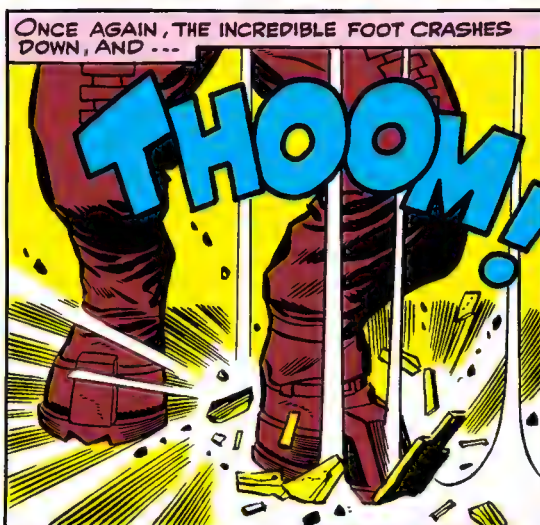
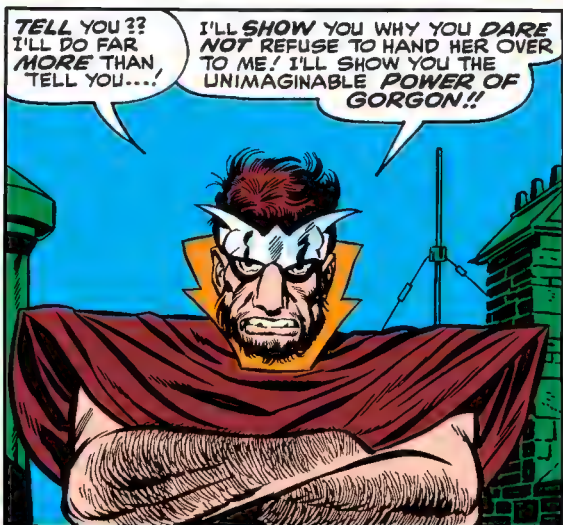
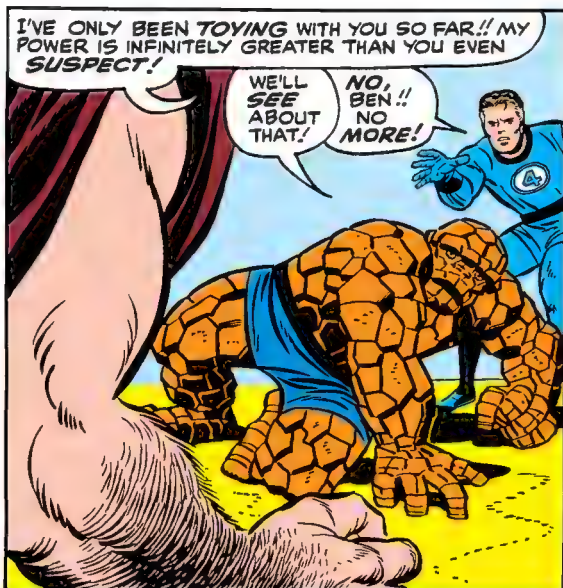
HEY! WHAT GIVES...? YER SLIPPERY AS A BLASTED EEL!

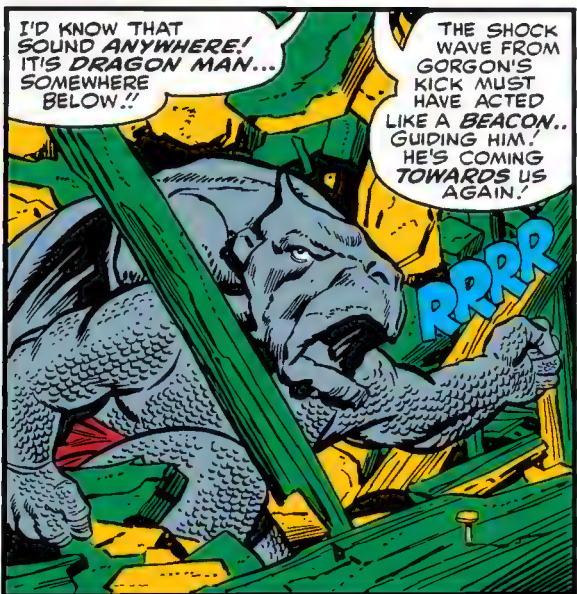
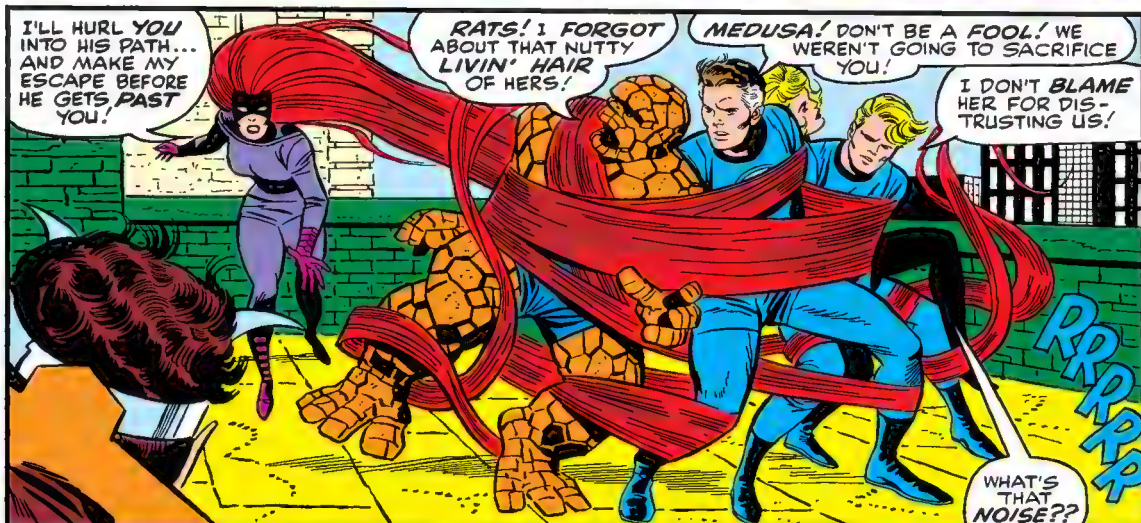
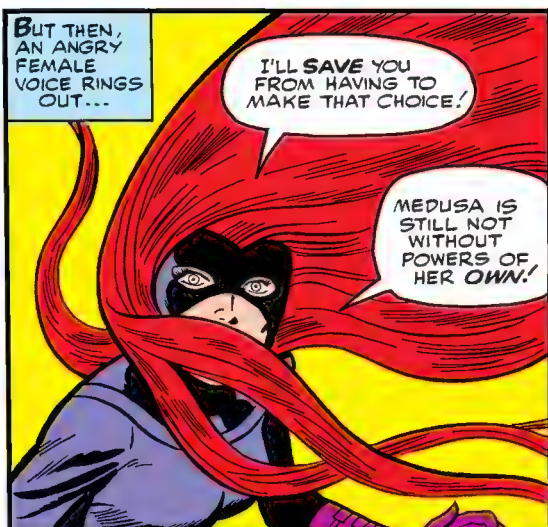
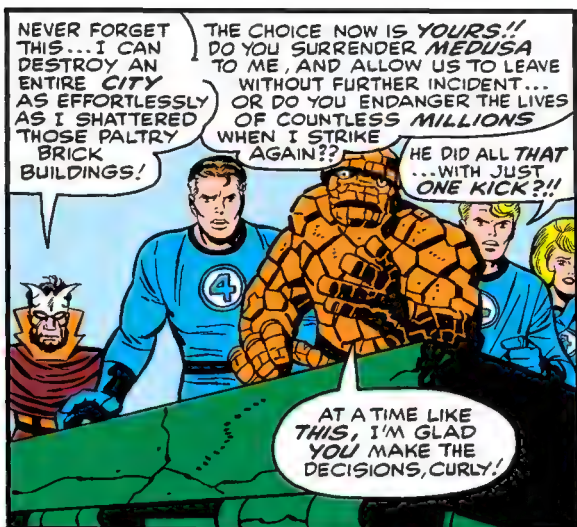
AND FAR MORE DANGEROUS... AS YOU WILL SOON SEE!

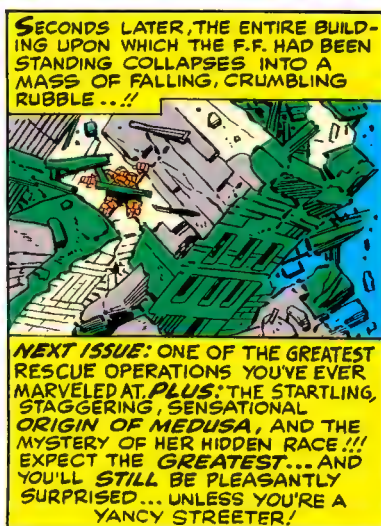
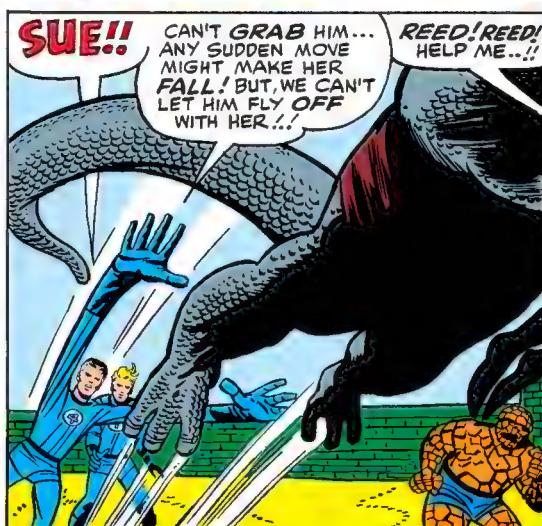
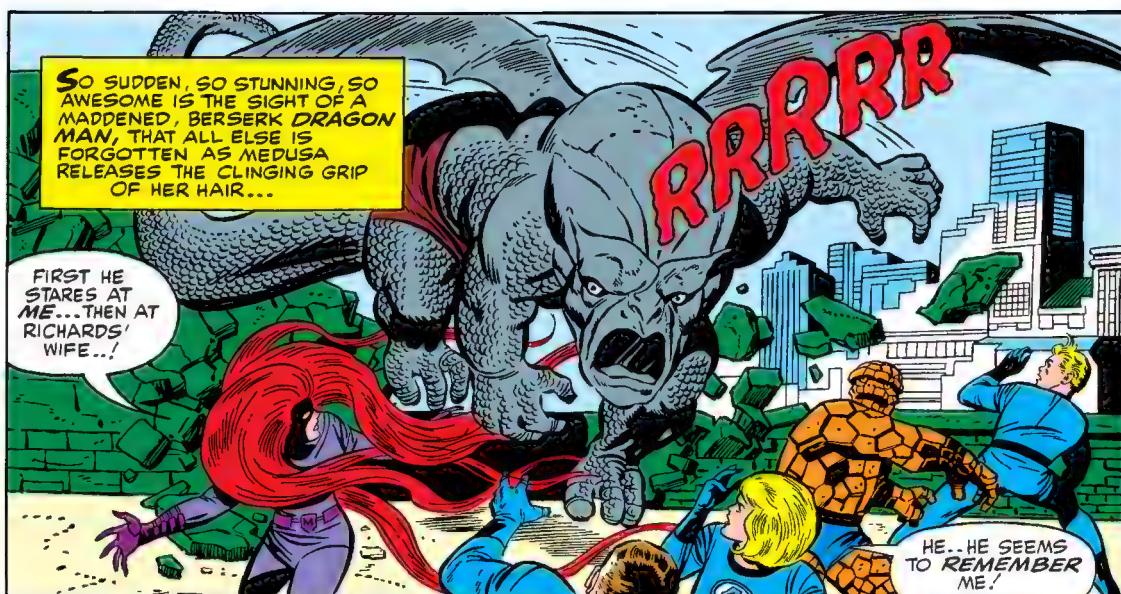


WHOP!









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Fantastic FOUR

"AMONG US
HIDE...
THE INHUMANS!"



THE FABULOUS **F.F.** ARE STUNNED BY THE DISCOVERY THAT...

"AMONG US HIDE... THE INHUMANS"

QUICK, JOHNNY!
GRAB MY HANDS...
BEFORE IT'S TOO
LATE!

WILL DO! BUT
--WHAT ABOUT
POOR BEN?

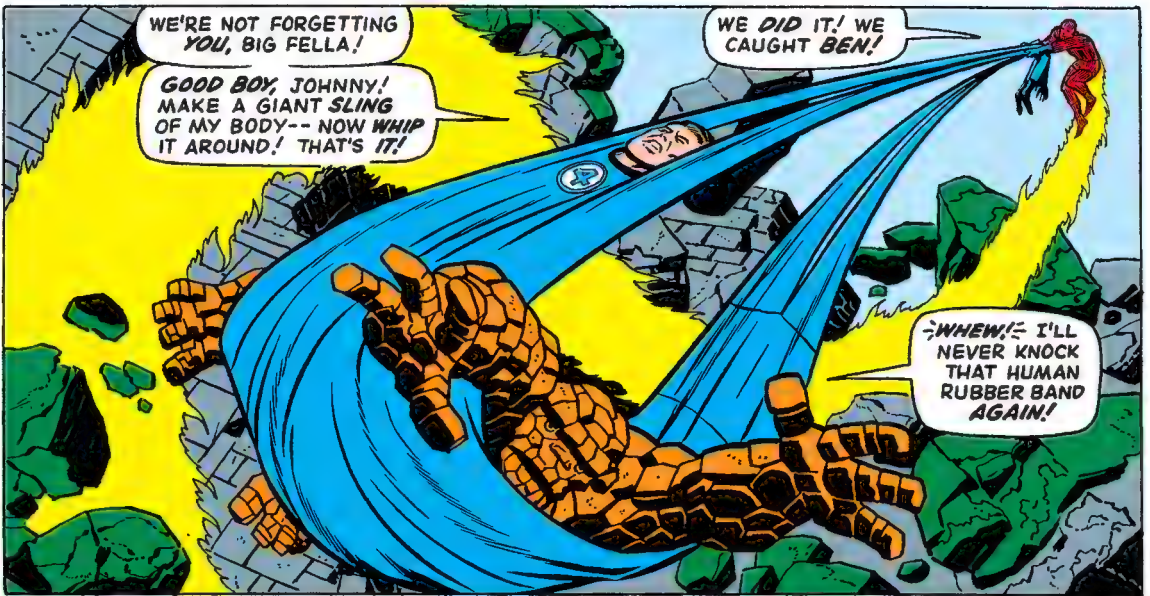
DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME, KID!
SAVE REED!
HE'S THE ONE
WHO REALLY
COUNTS!

THE GIGANTIC **DRAGON MAN**
FLEW OFF WITH REED RICHARDS'
BRIDE, WHILE A MYSTERIOUS
BEING NAMED **GORGON**
FINALLY SUCCEEDED IN
CAPTURING **MEDUSA** AS WELL!
THEN, TO PREVENT THE F.F.
FROM PURSUING HIM, GORGON
CAUSED THIS ENTIRE DESERTED
BUILDING TO **COLLAPSE** WITH
AN AWESOME, EAR-SHATTERING
KICK...

IN CASE YOU
GOOFED OFF
LAST ISH,
HERE'S WHAT
YOU
MISSED...

I'VE BEEN
NOTHIN' BUT A
THORN IN YER
SIDES FOR
MONTHS,
ANYWAY!

INCREDIBLE STORY BY..... **STAN LEE!**
INCOMPARABLE PENCILLING BY... **JACK KIRBY!**
INVINCIBLE INKING BY..... **JOE SINNOTT!**
INEVITABLE LETTERING BY..... **ARTIE SIMEK!**

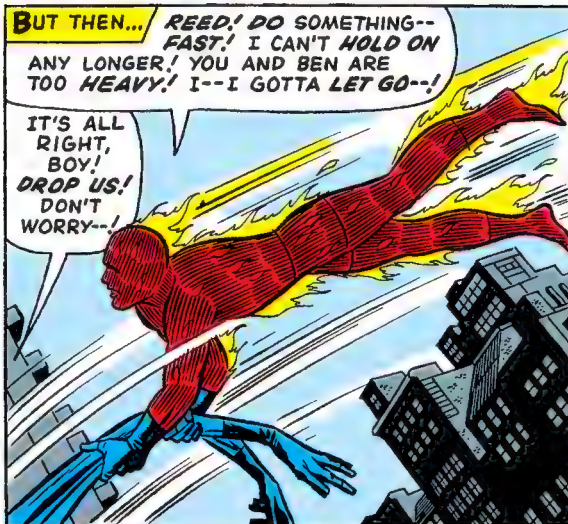


WE'RE NOT FORGETTING YOU, BIG FELLA!

GOOD BOY, JOHNNY! MAKE A GIANT SLING OF MY BODY-- NOW WHIP IT AROUND! THAT'S IT!

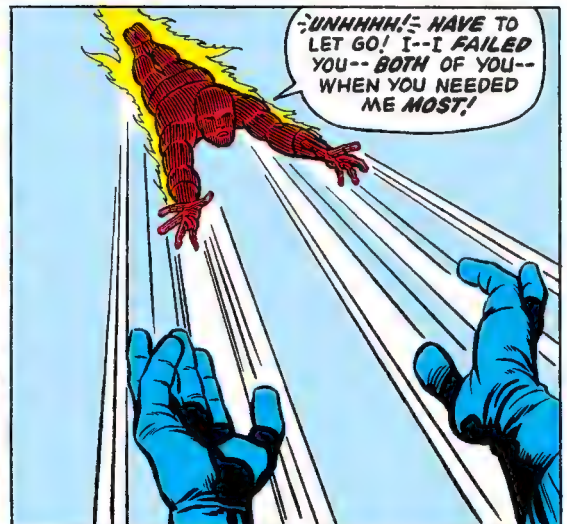
WE DID IT! WE CAUGHT BEN!

~WHHEW!~ I'LL NEVER KNOCK THAT HUMAN RUBBER BAND AGAIN!

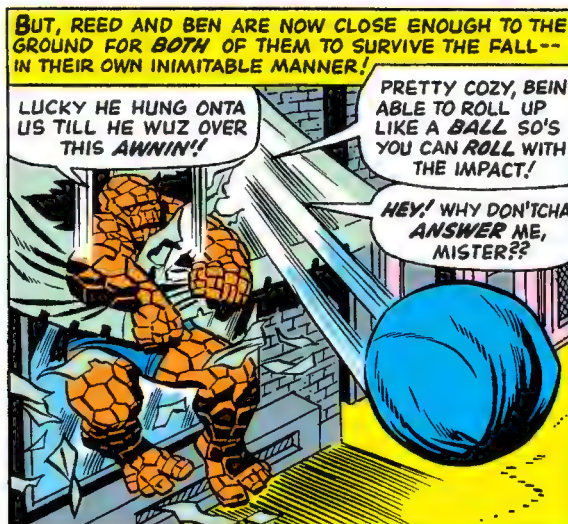


BUT THEN... REED! DO SOMETHING-- FAST! I CAN'T HOLD ON ANY LONGER! YOU AND BEN ARE TOO HEAVY! I--I GOTTA LET GO--!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, BOY! DROP US! DON'T WORRY--!



~UNHHHH~ HAVE TO LET GO! I--I FAILED YOU-- BOTH OF YOU-- WHEN YOU NEEDED ME MOST!

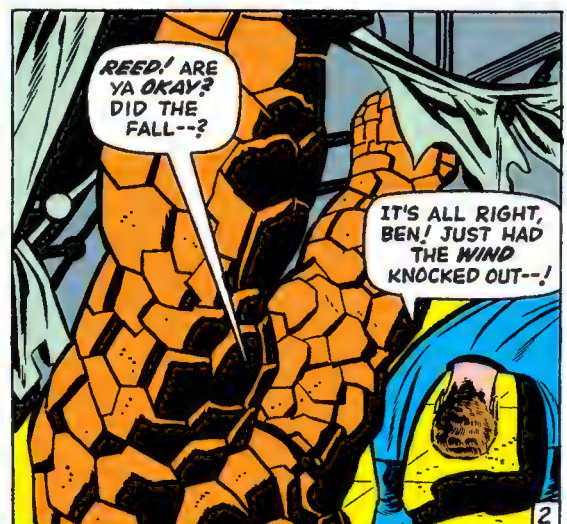


BUT, REED AND BEN ARE NOW CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE GROUND FOR BOTH OF THEM TO SURVIVE THE FALL-- IN THEIR OWN INIMITABLE MANNER!

LUCKY HE HUNG ONTA US TILL HE WUZ OVER THIS AWWIN'!

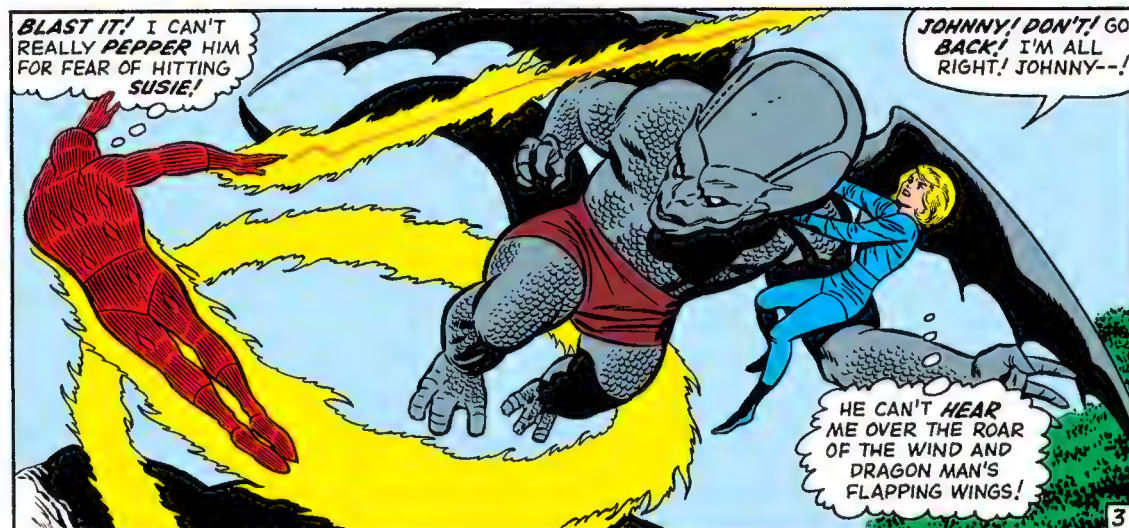
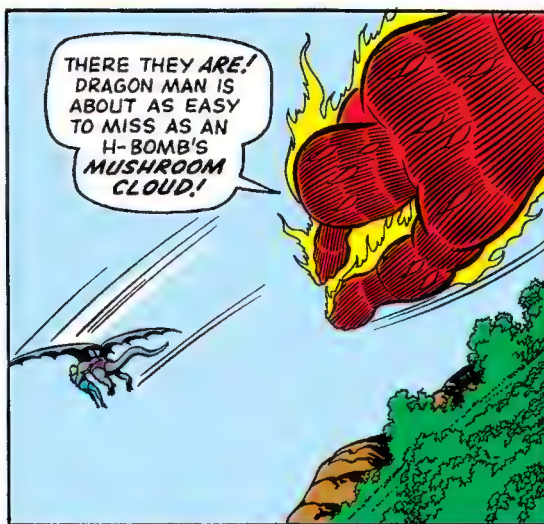
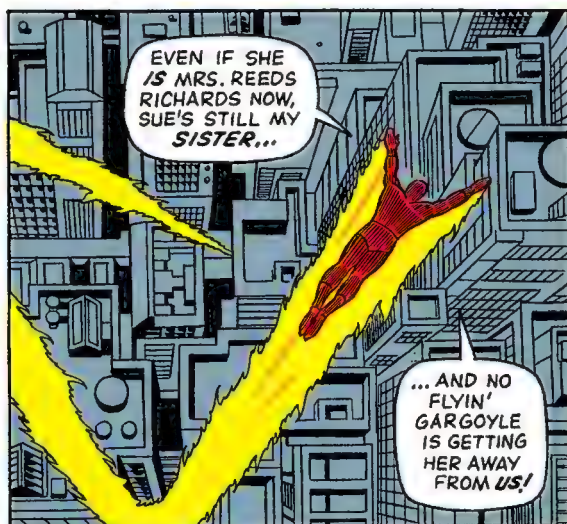
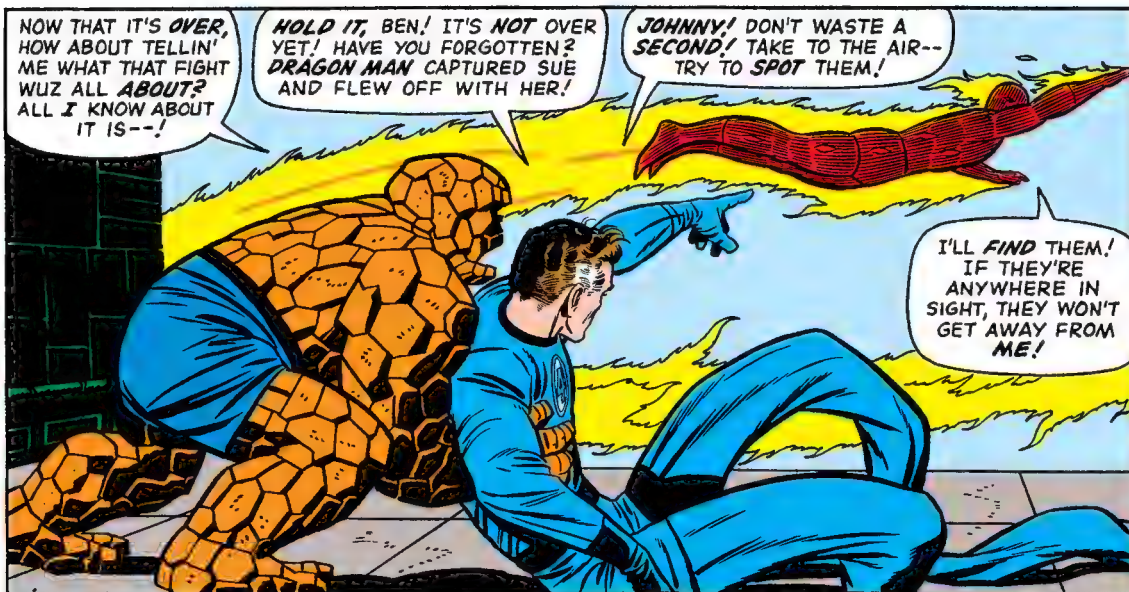
PRETTY COZY, BEIN' ABLE TO ROLL UP LIKE A BALL SO'S YOU CAN ROLL WITH THE IMPACT!

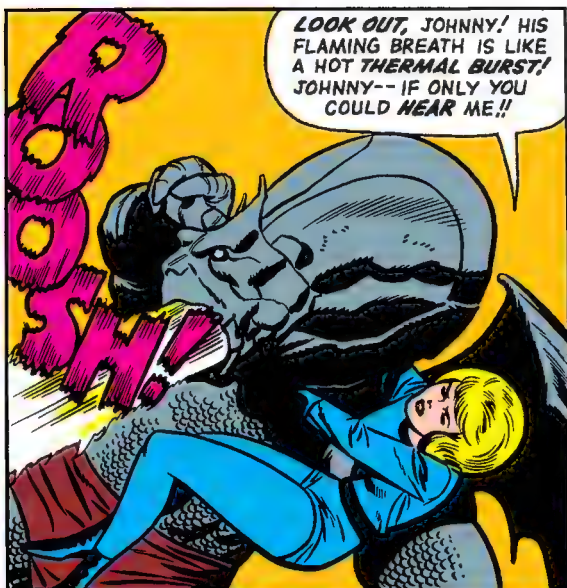
HEY! WHY DON'TCHA ANSWER ME, MISTER??



REED! ARE YA OKAY? DID THE FALL--?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, BEN! JUST HAD THE WIND KNOCKED OUT--!



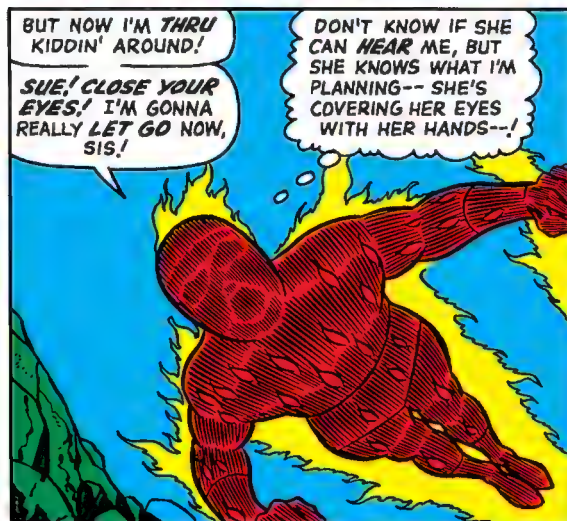


LOOK OUT, JOHNNY! HIS
FLAMING BREATH IS LIKE
A HOT **THERMAL BURST!**
JOHNNY-- IF ONLY YOU
COULD **HEAR ME!!**



BOY! THAT WAS A CLOSE
ONE! I ALMOST GOT CAUGHT
IN THE **BLAST**, CAUSED BY
HIS THERMAL HEAT HITTING
THE ATOMS OF THE AIR!

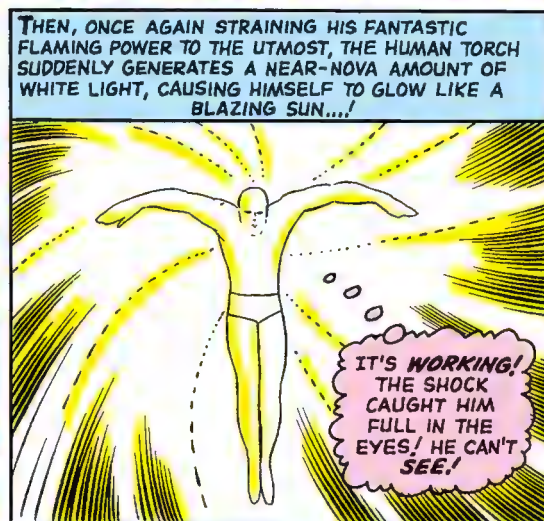
I'D BETTER WATCH
OUT--I'M BEGINNIN'
TO SOUND LIKE
REED!



BUT NOW I'M **THRU**
KIDDIN' AROUND!

SUE! CLOSE YOUR
EYES! I'M GONNA
REALLY **LET GO NOW**,
SIS!

DON'T KNOW IF SHE
CAN **HEAR** ME, BUT
SHE KNOWS WHAT I'M
PLANNING-- SHE'S
COVERING HER EYES
WITH HER HANDS--!



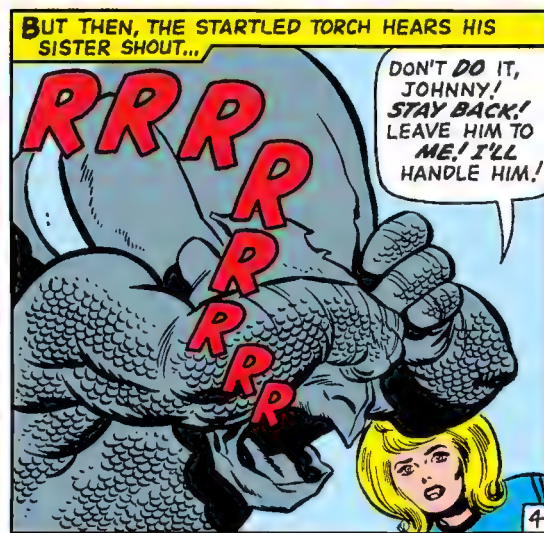
THEN, ONCE AGAIN STRAINING HIS FANTASTIC
FLAMING POWER TO THE UTMOST, THE HUMAN TORCH
SUDDENLY GENERATES A NEAR-NOVA AMOUNT OF
WHITE LIGHT, CAUSING HIMSELF TO GLOW LIKE A
BLAZING SUN....!

IT'S **WORKING!**
THE SHOCK
CAUGHT HIM
FULL IN THE
EYES! HE CAN'T
SEE!



PERFECT! IT BROUGHT HIM
DOWN TO EARTH WITH SUE!
HE **RELEASED** HER AS HE
LANDED!

NOW I CAN
TEAR INTO
'IM....!



BUT THEN, THE STARTLED TORCH HEARS HIS
SISTER SHOUT...

DON'T **DO** IT,
JOHNNY!
STAY BACK!
LEAVE HIM TO
ME! I'LL
HANDLE HIM!

BUT NOW, LET'S CHANGE OUR SCENE FOR A MOMENT, AS FATE TOYS WITH HER MANY MYSTIC HUMAN STRANDS...

HEY, SANDMAN! YOU WON'T ACT SO HIGH 'N MIGHTY NOW! YOU'LL NEVER BUST OUTTA THAT CELL!

SOCK THAT DOOR ALL YOU WANT TO, TOUGH GUY! NOTHING CAN SEEP THRU THAT SOLID 12-INCH BLOCK OF PLASTIC!



AND, WITHIN THE SPECIALLY-BUILT PRISON CELL, WE FIND...

THE WIZARD'S IN THE PRISON HOSPITAL, AFTER HIS FIGHT WITH THE THING, SO HE CAN'T HELP US...

AW, WHO NEEDS MEDUSA! IF THEY HADN'T TAKEN MY TRAPS AWAY FROM ME, I COULD GET US OUT OF HERE MYSELF!

BUT, MEDUSA IS STILL FREE! WHAT'S STOPPIN' HER FROM GETTIN' US OUTTA HERE!

BUT THEY DID TAKE 'EM AWAY --SO, SHUDDUP!



JUST MY LUCK! I HAVETA BE STUCK IN A CELL WITH THE TRAPSTER-- WITHOUT HIS TRAPS!

YOU SHOULD TALK! A LOTTA GOOD YOU'RE DOIN' US, SANDMAN!

THERE'S NOTHIN' I CAN DO! THERE AINT THE SMALLEST SPACE IN THAT PLASTIC FOR ME TO--HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!



MAYBE I CAN'T SMASH THRU A PLASTIC WALL, BUT I CAN SURE MAKE MY FIST ROCK-HARD ENOUGH TO PUNCH MY WAY THRU THAT WINDOW!

WAIT! THEY MUST HAVE SOMETHING UP THEIR SLEEVES! THEY WOULDN'T MAKE IT SO EASY FOR YOU--!



I'M THRU WAITIN'! HERE GOES--!

BUT, THE SECOND SANDMAN'S POWERFUL FIST CRASHES THRU THE THICK PANE OF GLASS, A HIGH-VOLTAGE ELECTRIC SHOCK DRIVES HIM BACK WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR OF RAGE!

YEWWW!



SATISFIED, SMART GUY? AND LOOK-- ANOTHER PANE OF GLASS HAS ALREADY SLID INTO PLACE, SO YOU'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU STARTED FROM!

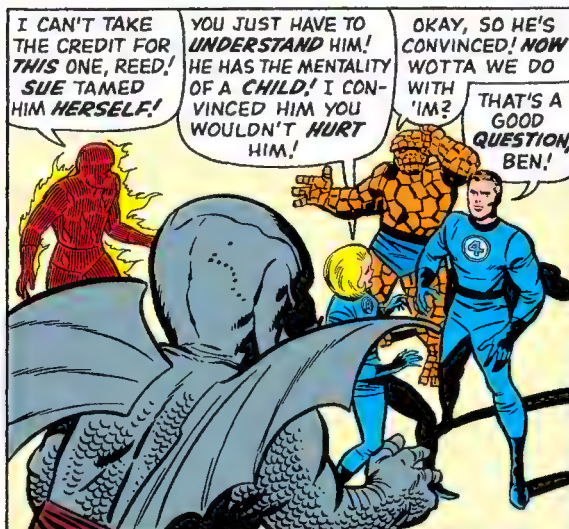
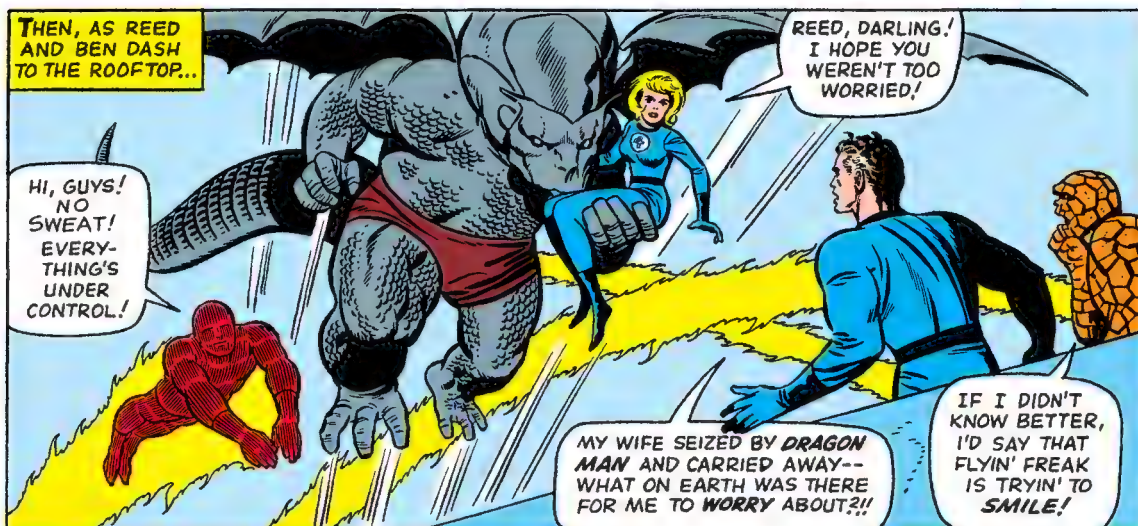
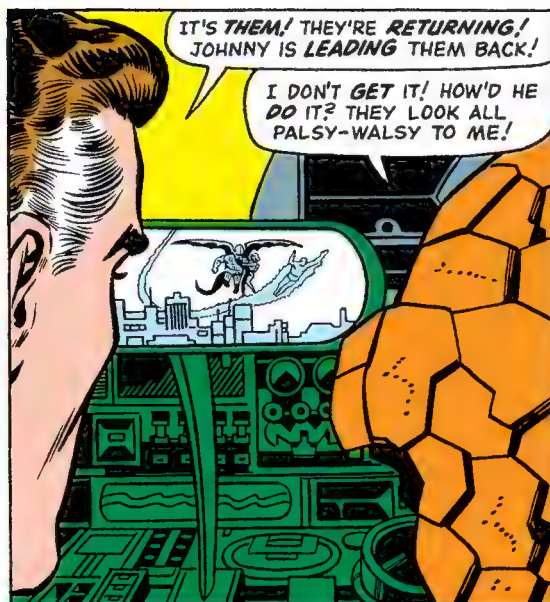
AWRIGHT! AWRIGHT! AT LEAST I TRIED, DIDN'T I? IT'S MORE THAN MEDUSA IS DOIN'!

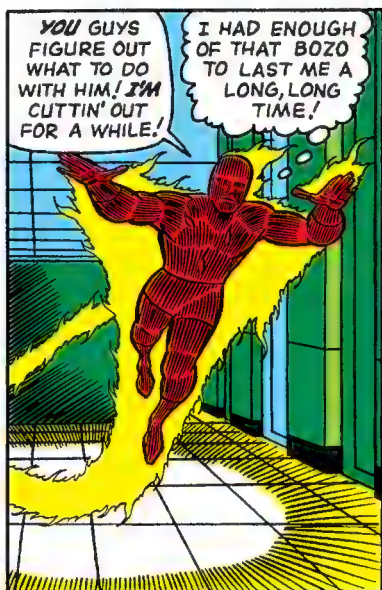
WHERE IN BLAZES IS SHE??

MAYBE SHE LOST INTEREST IN THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR! BUT, DON'T WORRY! I'LL THINK OF SOME WAY TO GET US OUTTA HERE!

THE TRAPSTER ISN'T BEATEN YET! YOU'LL SEE--!





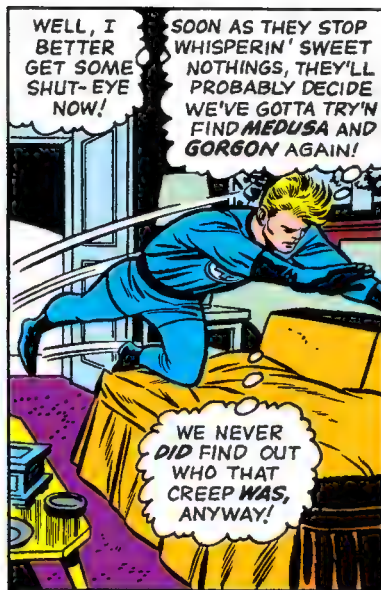


YOU GUYS
FIGURE OUT
WHAT TO DO
WITH HIM! I'M
CUTTIN' OUT
FOR A WHILE!

I HAD ENOUGH
OF THAT BOZO
TO LAST ME A
LONG, LONG
TIME!



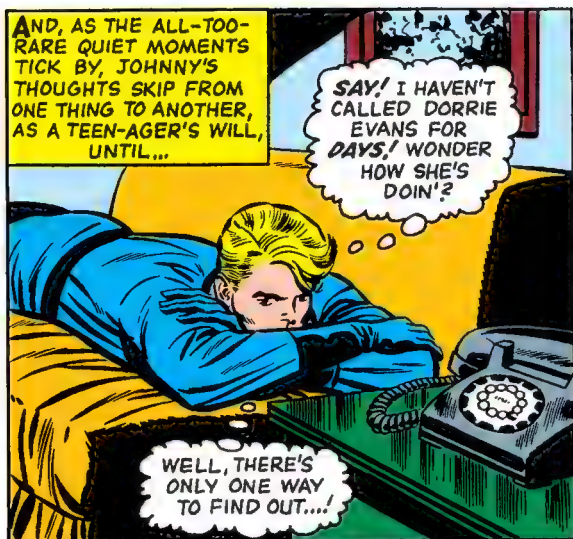
IN A WAY, IT MUST BE *TOUGH*
FOR REED AND SIS BEIN'
MARRIED NOW! REED REALLY
LOOKED ALL SHOOK-UP WITH
WORRY WHEN WE
GOT BACK!



WELL, I
BETTER
GET SOME
SHUT-EYE
NOW!

SOON AS THEY STOP
WHISPERIN' SWEET
NOTHINGS, THEY'LL
PROBABLY DECIDE
WE'VE GOTTA TRY'N
FIND *MEDUSA* AND
GORSON AGAIN!

WE NEVER
DID FIND OUT
WHO THAT
CREEP *WAS*,
ANYWAY!



AND, AS THE ALL-TOO-
RARE QUIET MOMENTS
TICK BY, JOHNNY'S
THOUGHTS SKIP FROM
ONE THING TO ANOTHER,
AS A TEEN-AGER'S WILL,
UNTIL...

SAY! I HAVEN'T
CALLED DORRIE
EVANS FOR
DAYS! WONDER
HOW SHE'S
DOIN'?

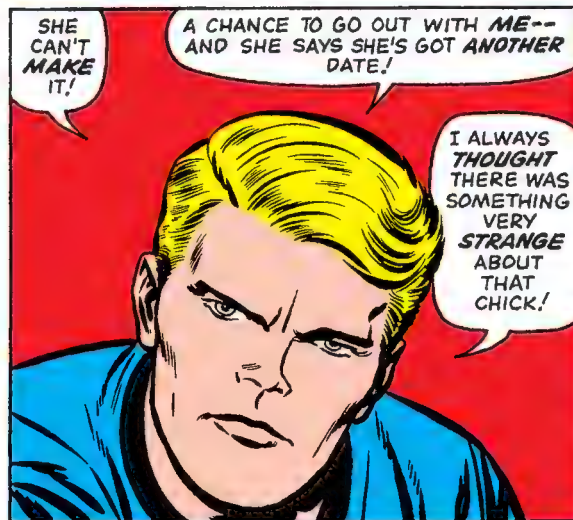
WELL, THERE'S
ONLY ONE WAY
TO FIND OUT...



HI, DORRIE-DOLL! THIS IS YOUR HOT-SHOT
HEART-THROB, HONEY!

HOW ABOUT SWIGGIN' A SODA
WITH ME WHILE WE TALK ABOUT
MY FAVORITE SUBJECT--*US*!

HUH? WHAT
DID YOU
SAY--?



SHE
CAN'T
MAKE
IT!

A CHANCE TO GO OUT WITH *ME*--
AND SHE SAYS SHE'S GOT *ANOTHER*
DATE!

I ALWAYS
THOUGHT
THERE WAS
SOMETHING
VERY
STRANGE
ABOUT
THAT CHICK!



MINUTES LATER, IN THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, A
LONE FIGURE THOUGHTFULLY WALKS ALONG THE
MIDTOWN STREETS...

I'M TOO
RESTLESS
TO HANG
AROUND
OUR HQ--
MAYBE A
WALK'LL
CLEAR
THE OL'
COBWEBS!

AND THEN, ALMOST BEFORE JOHNNY REALIZES IT...

I MUST HAVE REALLY BEEN DAY-DREAMING! LOOK WHERE I ENDED UP!

THIS IS THAT SLUM NEIGHBORHOOD THAT'S GONNA BE TORN DOWN TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT!

WOW! I MUST BE SEEING THINGS! WHAT'S A VISION LIKE *THAT* DOING IN A DESERTED NEIGHBORHOOD!

SHE ALMOST DOESN'T EVEN LOOK *REAL*-- SORT-OF LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A FAIRY TALE!

I HATE TO BE DISLOYAL-- BUT SHE MAKES DORRIE EVANS SEEM LIKE A BOY!

SHE SEES ME! BUT-- SHE'S RECOILING! SHE SEEMS STARTLED! --WHY--?

WAIT! DON'T GO AWAY! I-I'D JUST LIKE TO TALK TO YOU! PLEASE-- DON'T BE ALARMED!

NO! NO! STAY BACK! YOU MUSTN'T--!

WHERE'D THIS WIND COME FROM?? IT'S LIKE A GALE!! IT BLEW UP OUT OF NOWHERE!

NO! NOT OUT OF NOWHERE! IT HAPPENED AS SOON AS I APPROACHED THE GIRL! ALMOST ON CUE!

SECONDS LATER, WHEN THE SUDDEN STORM SUBSIDES...

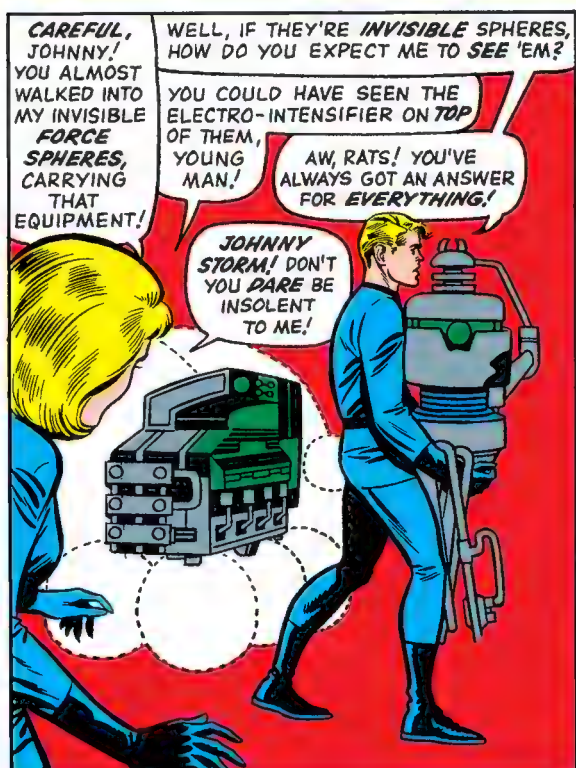
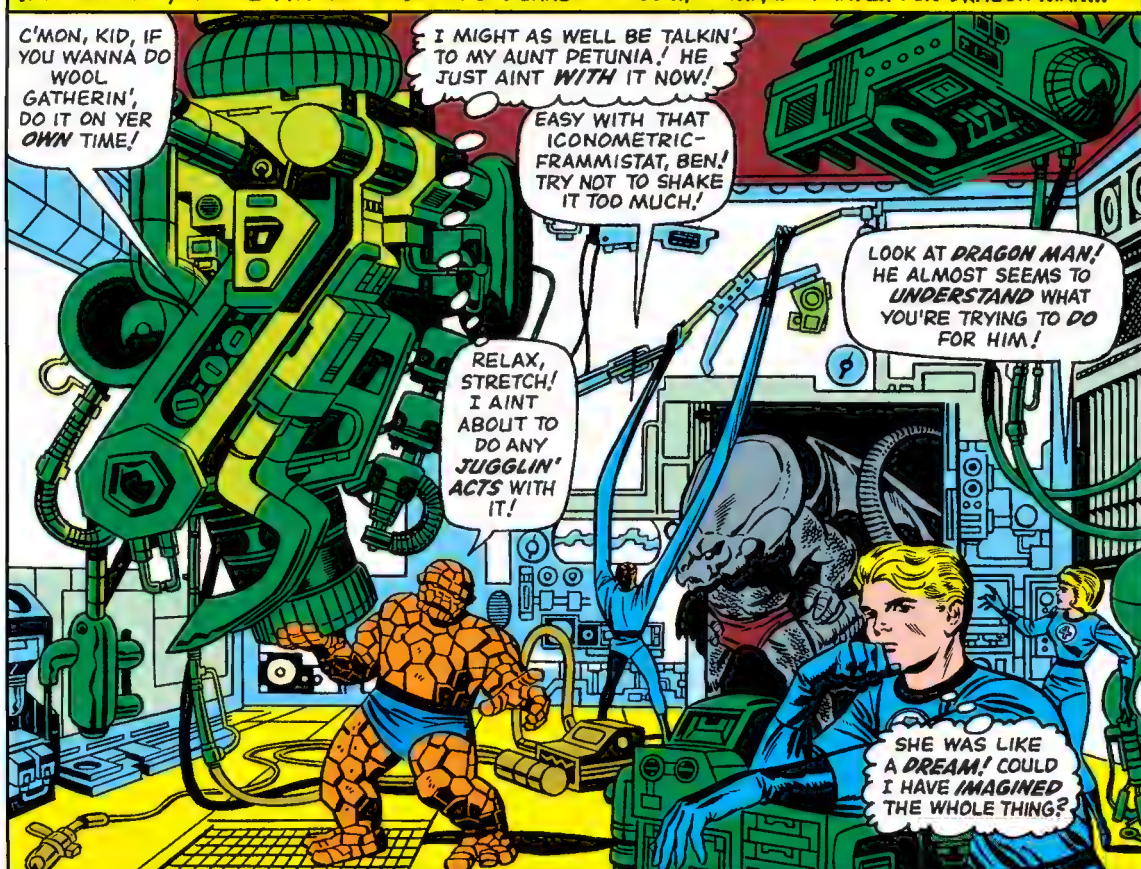
SHE'S GONE! BUT-- WHY DIDN'T THE STORM SEND *HER* SPRAWLING?? WHY WASN'T *SHE* AFFECTED?

IN SOME WAY, *SHE* CAUSED IT!-- IN ORDER TO GET AWAY FROM *ME*! I DON'T KNOW WHY--OR HOW--!

BUT I'M SURE AS BLAZES GONNA FIND *OUT*!

THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF GAL A FELLA FORGETS-- NOW, OR EVER!

THE NEXT DAY, AS THE F.F. CLEAR OUT THEIR LARGEST ROOM, TO MAKE A HAVEN FOR DRAGON MAN...



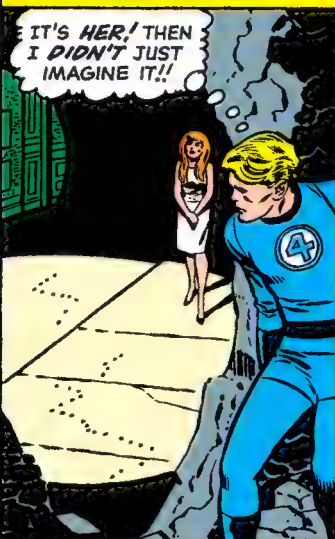
A SHORT TIME LATER, THE QUICK-TEMPERED TEEN-AGER, UNABLE TO GET THE GIRL HE HAD SEEN OUT OF HIS MIND, RETURNS TO THE DESOLATE NEIGHBORHOOD...

I'M PROBABLY MAKIN' A FOOL OF MYSELF, BUT IF THERE'S ONE CHANCE IN A MILLION OF SEEIN' HER AGAIN, I'M TAKING IT!



THEN, AFTER ALMOST AN HOUR OF TENSE WAITING...

IT'S HER! THEN I DIDN'T JUST IMAGINE IT!!



YOU!!

HOLD IT, LADY! I DON'T BITE! I JUST WANNA TALK TO YOU!!



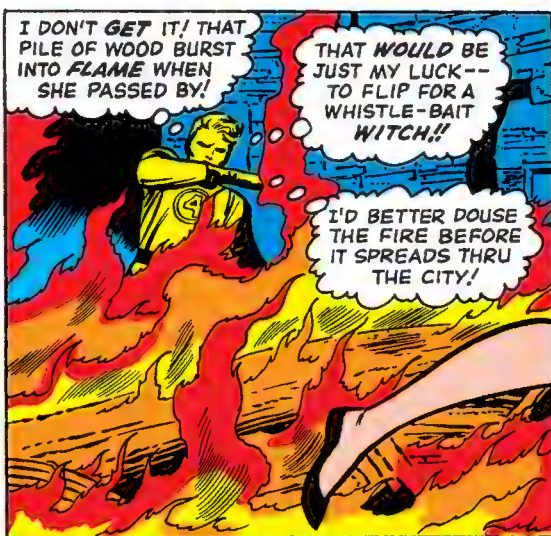
NO! I CAN'T! I MUSTN'T! IF "THEY" LEARN I WAS SEEN BY ANYONE--!

A GAL WITH YOUR LOOKS OUGHTTA BE SEEN BY EVERYONE!

WHO CAN SHE MEAN BY "THEY"?

GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE! PLEASE!! THEY MUST NOT FIND YOU!

GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE! PLEASE!! THEY MUST NOT FIND YOU!

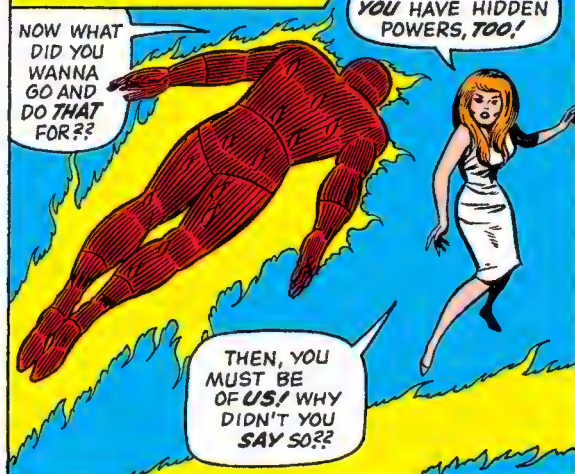


I DON'T GET IT! THAT PILE OF WOOD BURST INTO FLAME WHEN SHE PASSED BY!

THAT WOULD BE JUST MY LUCK-- TO FLIP FOR A WHISTLE-BAIT WITCH!!

I'D BETTER DOUSE THE FIRE BEFORE IT SPREADS THRU THE CITY!

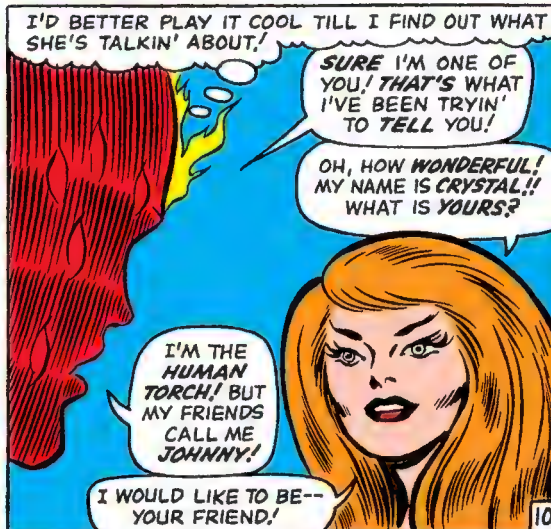
SECONDS LATER, AFTER FLAMING ON, THUS GATHERING THE BLAZE UNTO HIMSELF...



NOW WHAT DID YOU WANNA GO AND DO THAT FOR??

YOU HAVE HIDDEN POWERS, TOO!

THEN, YOU MUST BE OF US! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO??



I'D BETTER PLAY IT COOL TILL I FIND OUT WHAT SHE'S TALKIN' ABOUT!

SURE I'M ONE OF YOU! THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYIN' TO TELL YOU!

OH, HOW WONDERFUL! MY NAME IS CRYSTAL!! WHAT IS YOURS??

I'M THE HUMAN TORCH! BUT MY FRIENDS CALL ME JOHNNY!

I WOULD LIKE TO BE-- YOUR FRIEND!

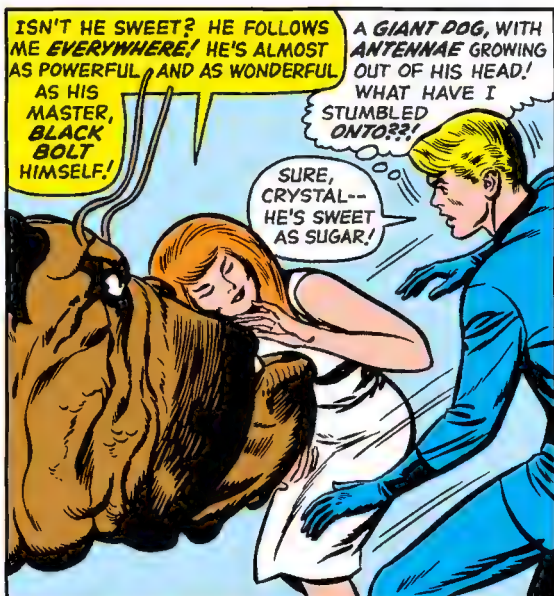


NOW THAT WE'VE GOT *THAT* SETTLED, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE ALONE? THIS IS NO NEIGHBORHOOD FOR A GIRL LIKE YOU!

OH, BUT I'M *NOT* ALONE! LOCKJAW IS WITH ME!

LOCKJAW??!

OF COURSE! HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU--!

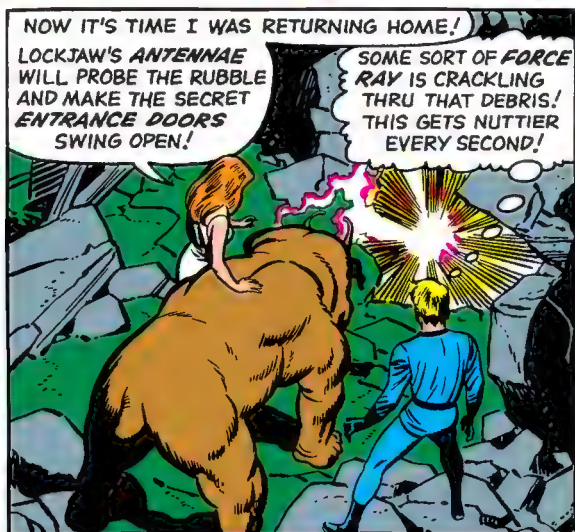


ISN'T HE SWEET? HE FOLLOWS ME *EVERYWHERE*! HE'S ALMOST AS POWERFUL, AND AS WONDERFUL AS HIS MASTER, **BLACK BOLT** HIMSELF!

A GIANT DOG, WITH ANTENNAE GROWING OUT OF HIS HEAD!

WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED ONTO??!

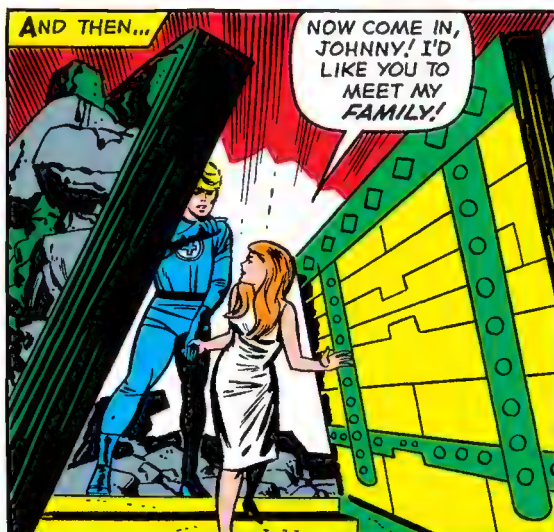
SURE, CRYSTAL-- HE'S SWEET AS SUGAR!



NOW IT'S TIME I WAS RETURNING HOME!

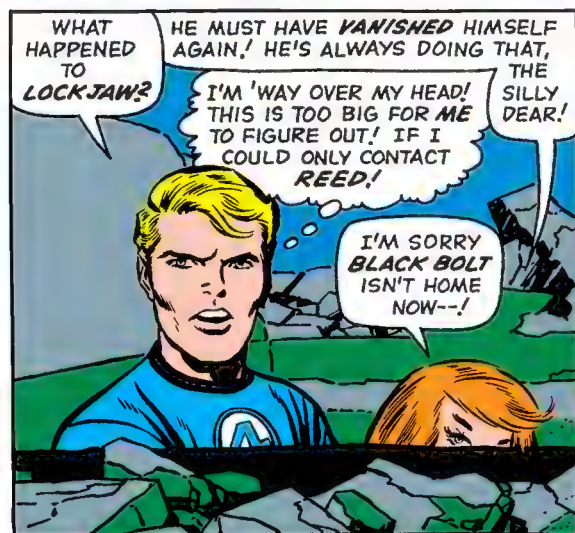
LOCKJAW'S ANTENNAE WILL PROBE THE RUBBLE AND MAKE THE SECRET ENTRANCE DOORS SWING OPEN!

SOME SORT OF **FORCE RAY** IS CRACKLING THRU THAT DEBRIS! THIS GETS NUTTIER EVERY SECOND!



AND THEN...

NOW COME IN, JOHNNY! I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY FAMILY!

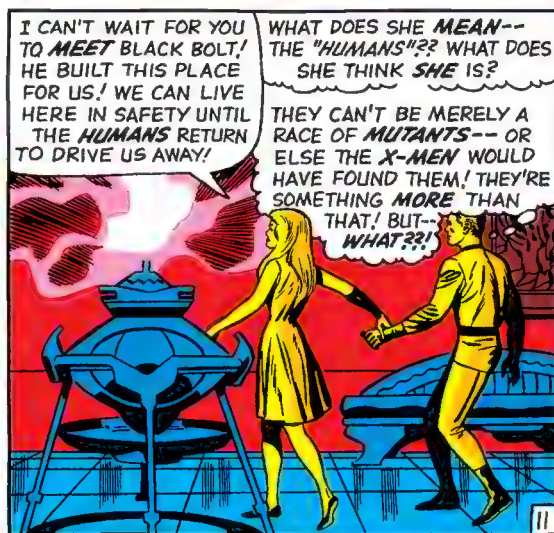


WHAT HAPPENED TO LOCKJAW?

HE MUST HAVE *VANISHED* HIMSELF AGAIN! HE'S ALWAYS DOING THAT, THE SILLY DEAR!

I'M 'WAY OVER MY HEAD! THIS IS TOO BIG FOR ME TO FIGURE OUT! IF I COULD ONLY CONTACT REED!

I'M SORRY **BLACK BOLT** ISN'T HOME NOW--!



I CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO *MEET* BLACK BOLT! HE BUILT THIS PLACE FOR US! WE CAN LIVE HERE IN SAFETY UNTIL THE *HUMANS* RETURN TO DRIVE US AWAY!

WHAT DOES SHE *MEAN*-- THE "*HUMANS*"?? WHAT DOES SHE THINK *SHE* IS?

THEY CAN'T BE MERELY A RACE OF *MUTANTS*-- OR ELSE THE *X-MEN* WOULD HAVE FOUND THEM! THEY'RE SOMETHING *MORE* THAN THAT! BUT-- *WHAT??!*

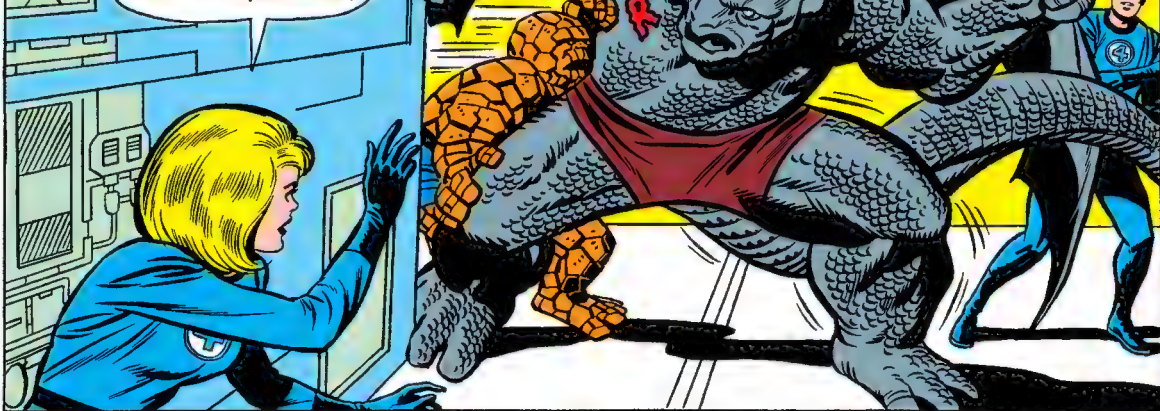
AND, WHILE A MYSTIFIED JOHNNY STORM SLOWLY DRAWS NEARER TO THE UNKNOWN, *ANOTHER* PROBLEM IS OCCUPYING HIS THREE PARTNERS...

MOVE, YOU OVERGROWN, SCALY-SKINNED SPARROW! I AINT GOT ALL DAY!

RRRRRR!

CAREFUL, BEN! A ROUGH TONE OF VOICE ONLY ANGERS HIM!

BEN! BE MORE GENTLE WITH HIM OR WE'LL NEVER GET HIM INTO HIS NEW QUARTERS!

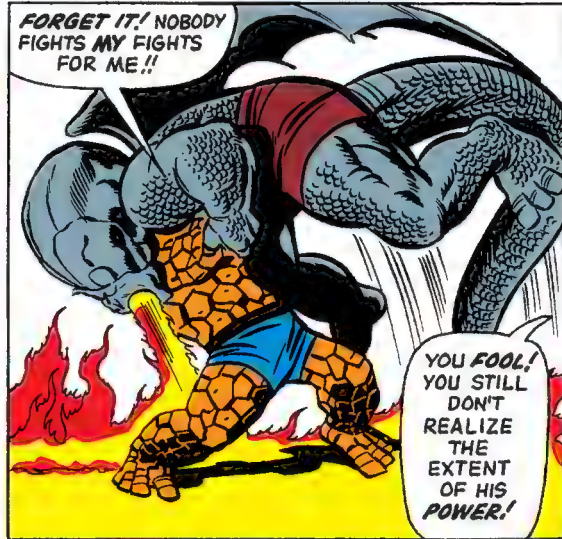
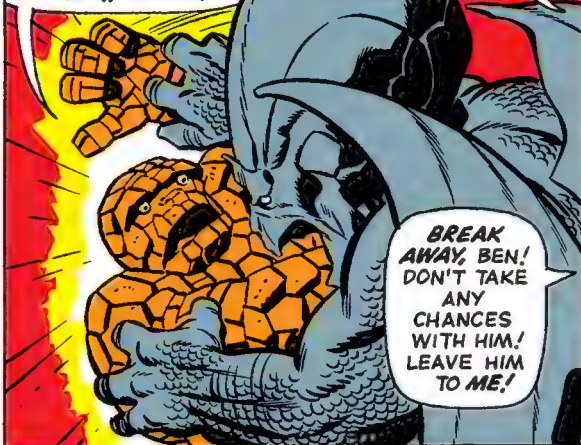


IF YA WANT A SOOTHIN' VOICE, GIT FRANK SINATRA!! I AINT-- HEY!! LEGGO!

REED! WHAT WILL WE DO?? HE'S GETTING OUT OF CONTROL AGAIN!

FORGET IT! NOBODY FIGHTS MY FIGHTS FOR ME!!

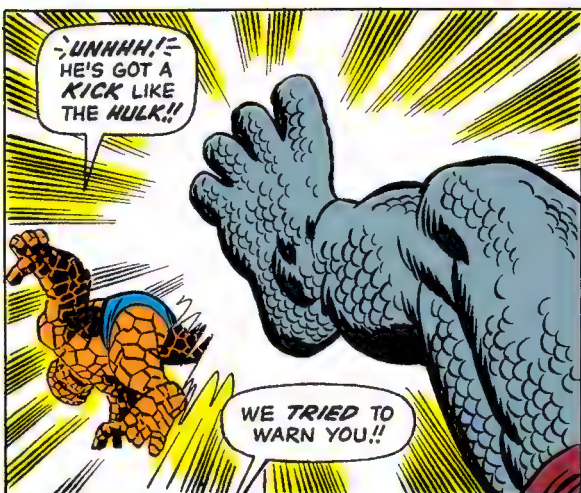
BREAK AWAY, BEN! DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH HIM! LEAVE HIM TO ME!



YOU FOOL! YOU STILL DON'T REALIZE THE EXTENT OF HIS POWER!

UNNNH!! HE'S GOT A KICK LIKE THE HULK!!

WE TRIED TO WARN YOU!!

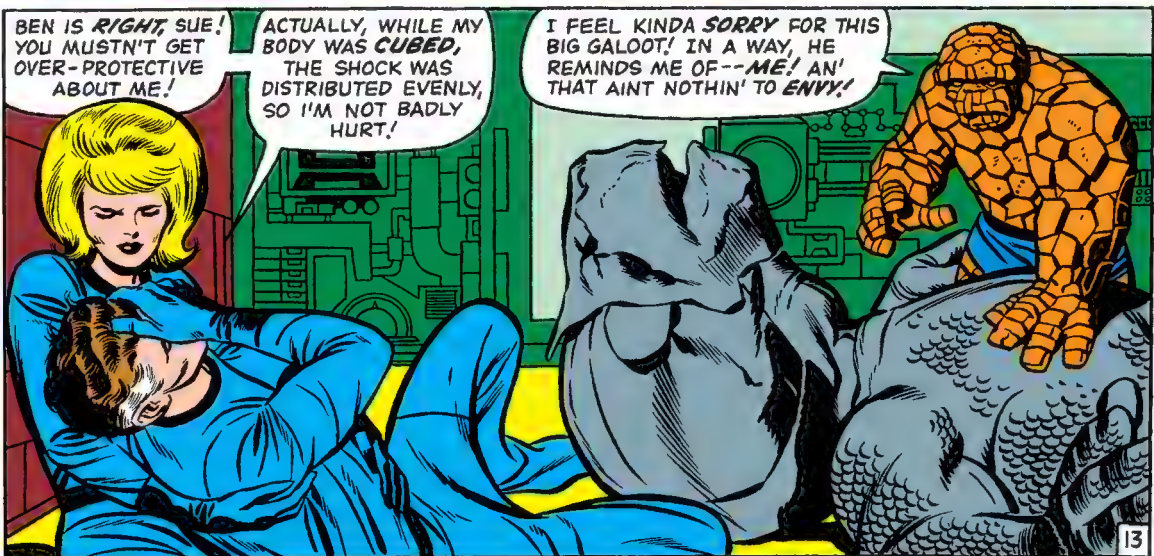
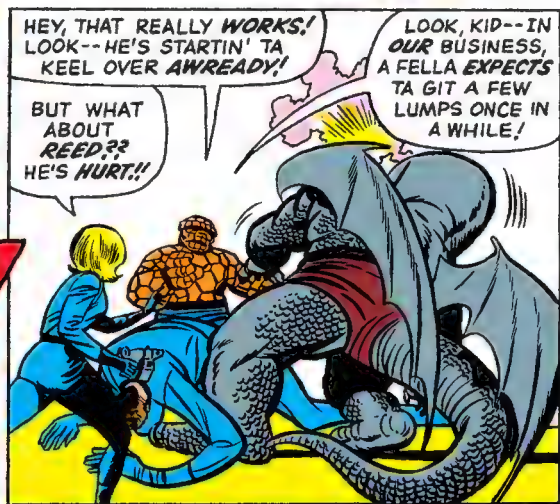
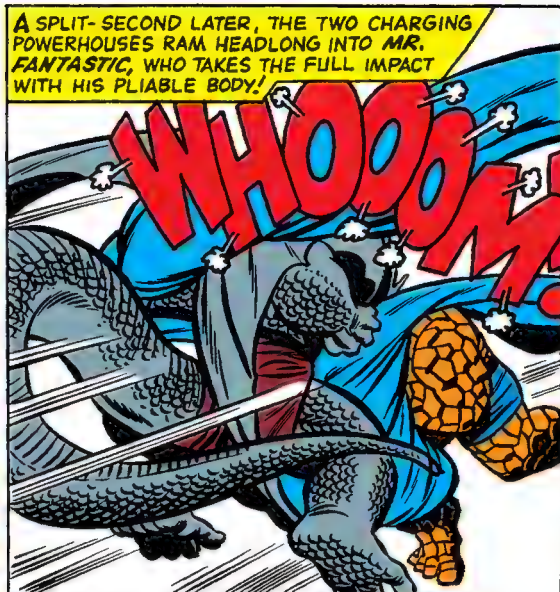


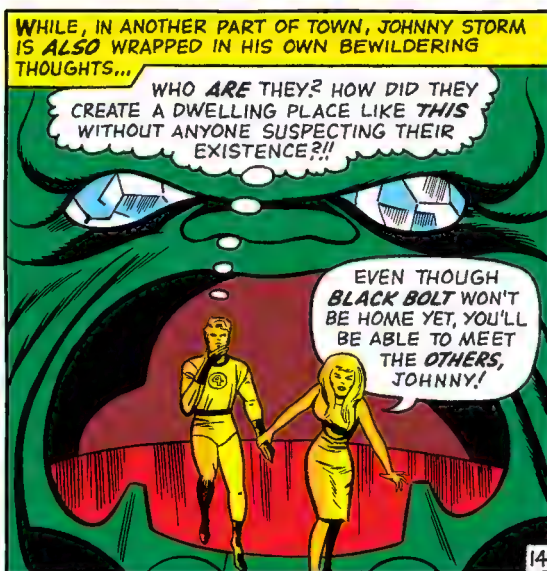
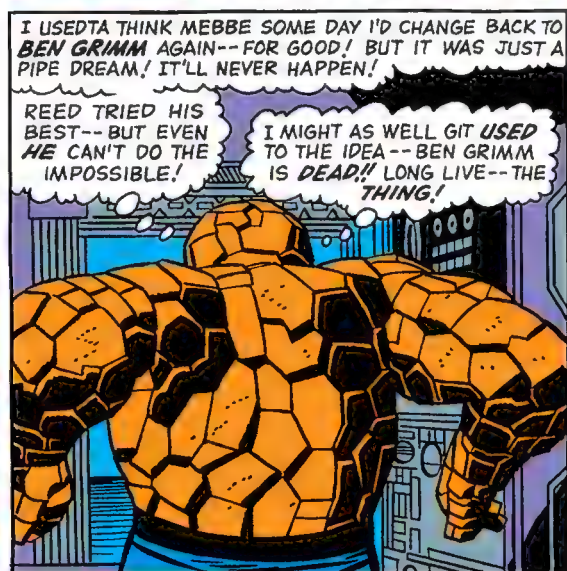
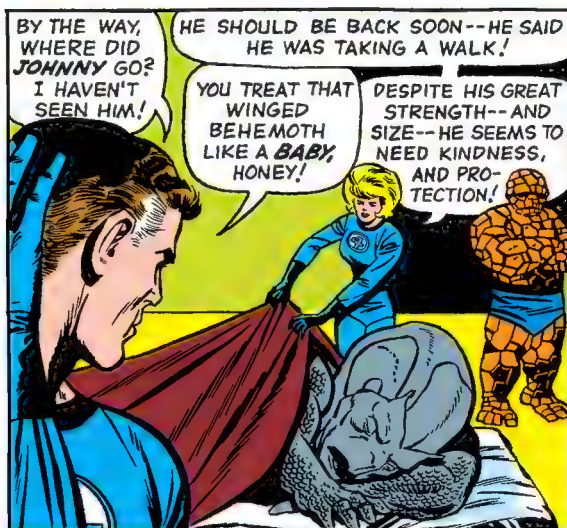
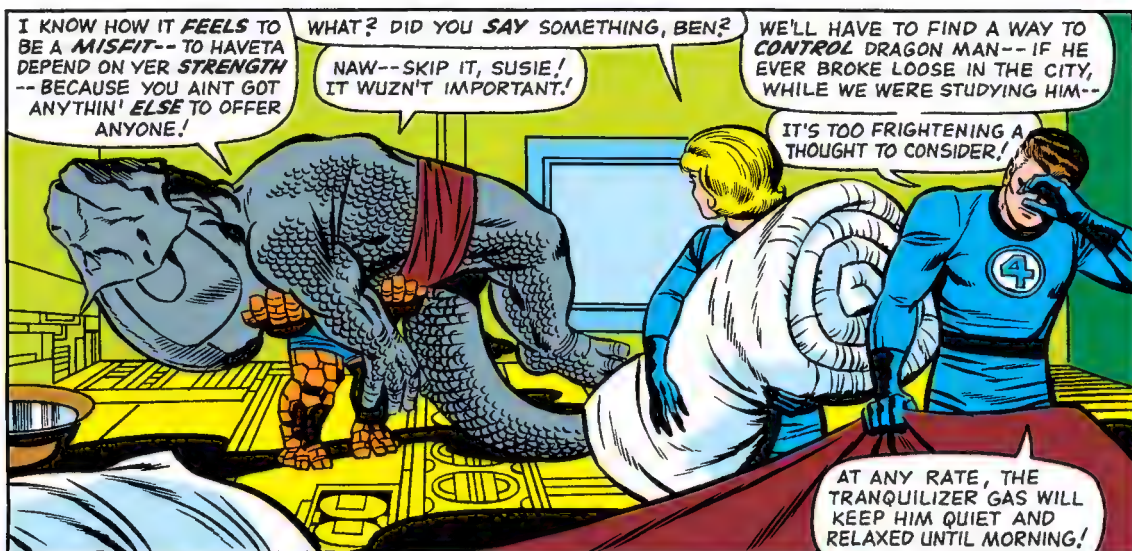
I'LL TRY TO BREAK THEM UP, HONEY! YOU SEE IF YOU CAN FIND THE TRANQUILIZER GUN!

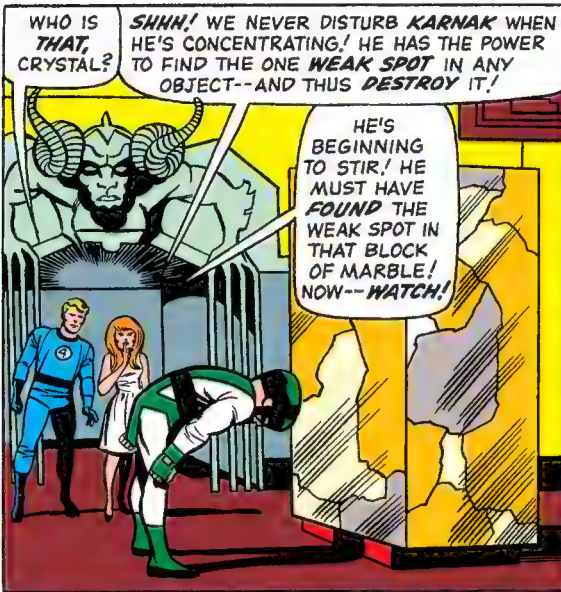
DON'T GET TOO NEAR THEM, DARLING--!

STOP SOUNDING LIKE A WIFE AND FIND ME THAT GUN, LADY!





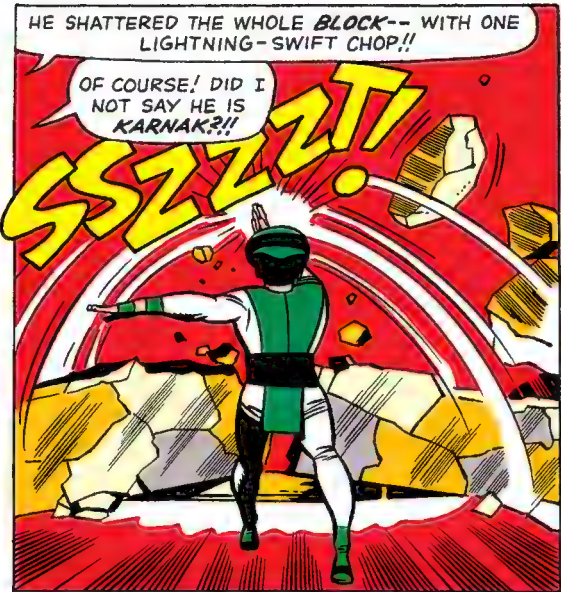




WHO IS THAT, CRYSTAL?

SHHH! WE NEVER DISTURB KARNAK WHEN HE'S CONCENTRATING! HE HAS THE POWER TO FIND THE ONE WEAK SPOT IN ANY OBJECT--AND THUS DESTROY IT!

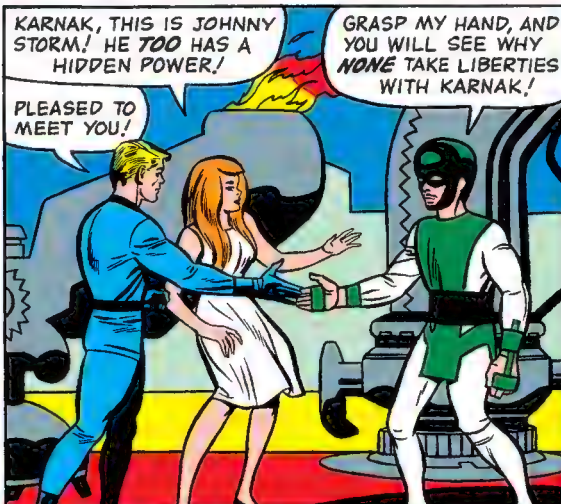
HE'S BEGINNING TO STIR! HE MUST HAVE FOUND THE WEAK SPOT IN THAT BLOCK OF MARBLE! NOW--WATCH!



HE SHATTERED THE WHOLE BLOCK-- WITH ONE LIGHTNING-SWIFT CHOP!!

OF COURSE! DID I NOT SAY HE IS KARNAK?!!

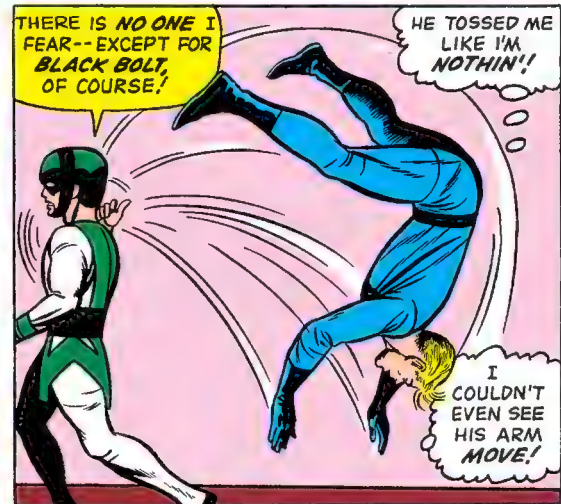
SSZZZT!



KARNAK, THIS IS JOHNNY STORM! HE TOO HAS A HIDDEN POWER!

GRASP MY HAND, AND YOU WILL SEE WHY NONE TAKE LIBERTIES WITH KARNAK!

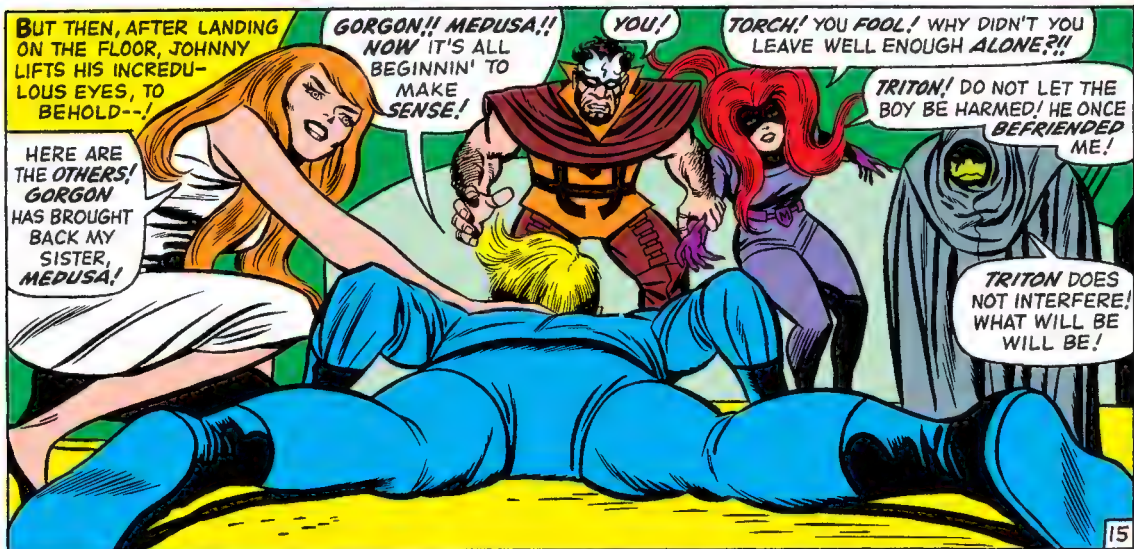
PLEASED TO MEET YOU!



THERE IS NO ONE I FEAR-- EXCEPT FOR BLACK BOLT, OF COURSE!

HE TOSSED ME LIKE I'M NOTHIN'!

I COULDN'T EVEN SEE HIS ARM MOVE!



BUT THEN, AFTER LANDING ON THE FLOOR, JOHNNY LIFTS HIS INCREDULOUS EYES, TO BEHOLD--!

GORGON!! MEDUSA!! NOW IT'S ALL BEGINNIN' TO MAKE SENSE!

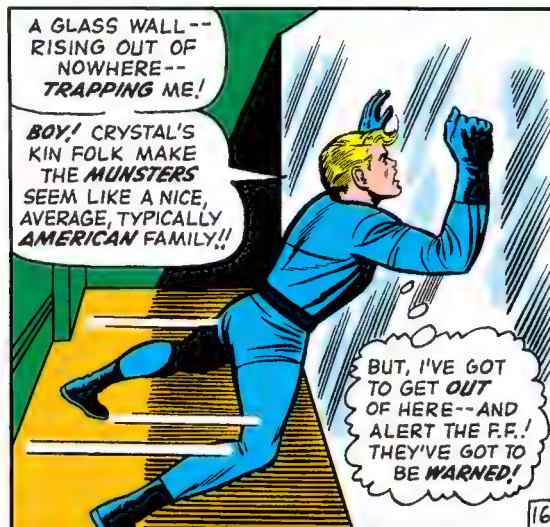
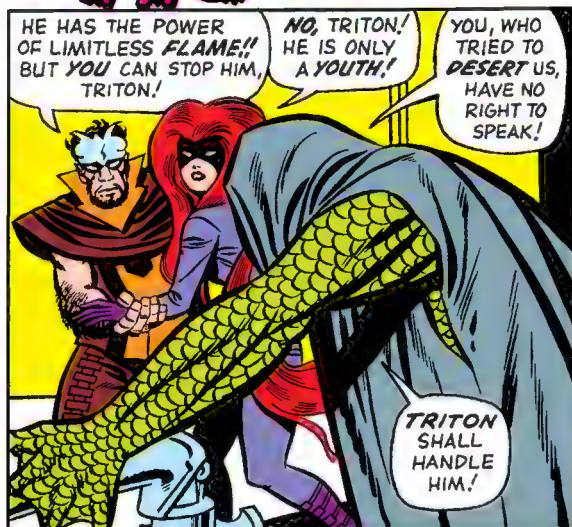
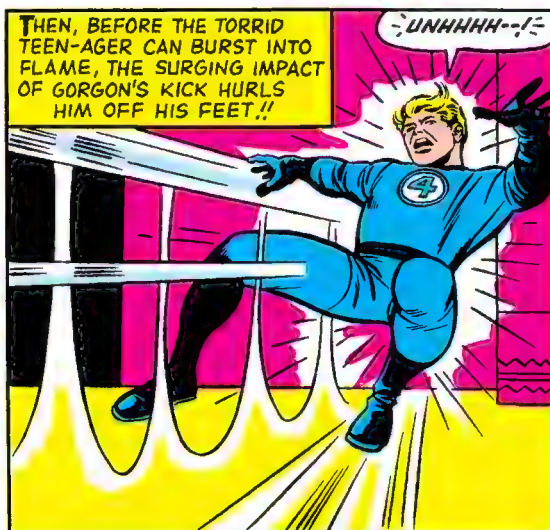
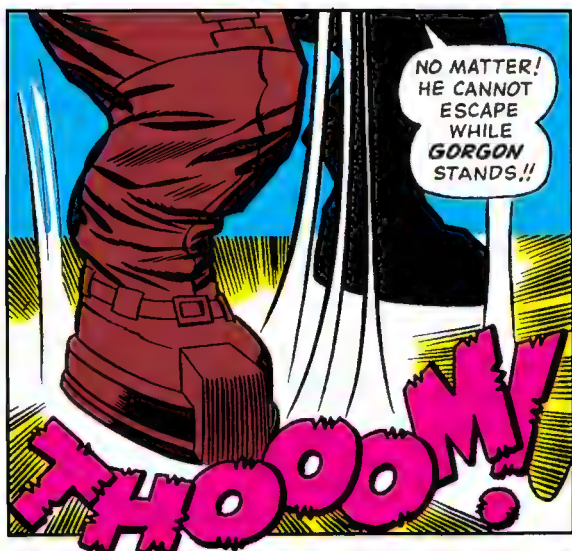
YOU!

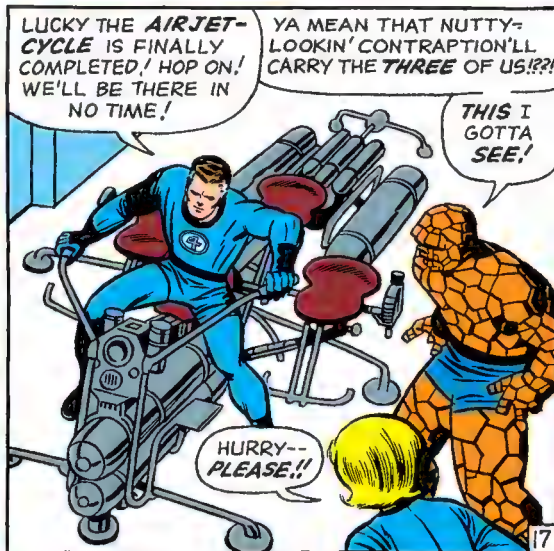
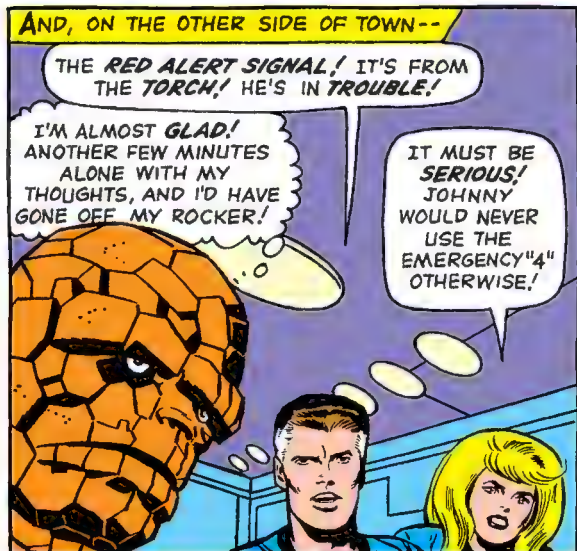
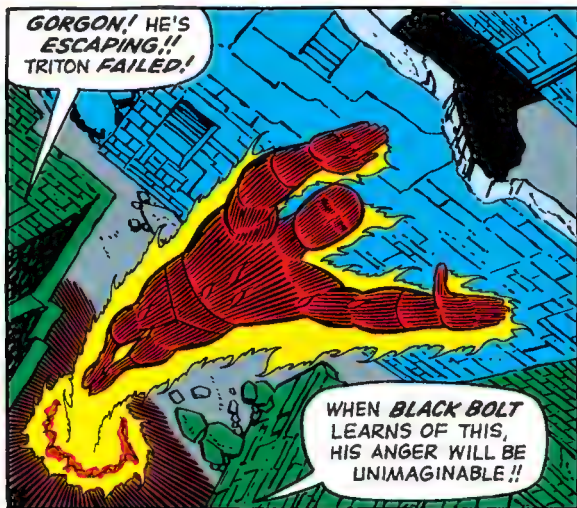
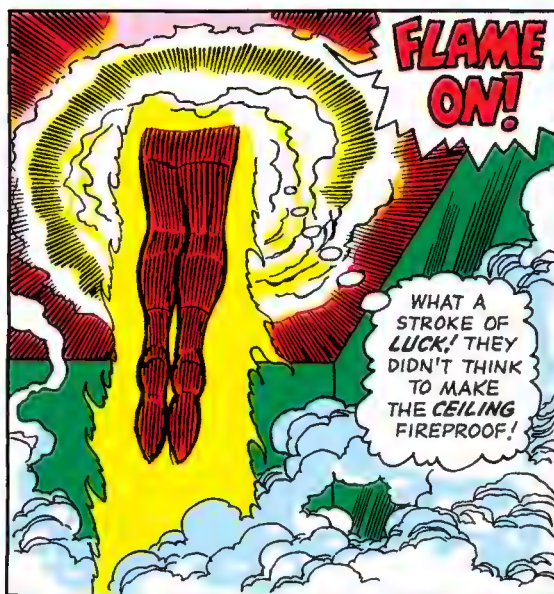
TORCH! YOU FOOL! WHY DIDN'T YOU LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE?!!

TRITON! DO NOT LET THE BOY BE HARMED! HE ONCE BEFRIENDED ME!

HERE ARE THE OTHERS! GORGON HAS BROUGHT BACK MY SISTER, MEDUSA!

TRITON DOES NOT INTERFERE! WHAT WILL BE WILL BE!



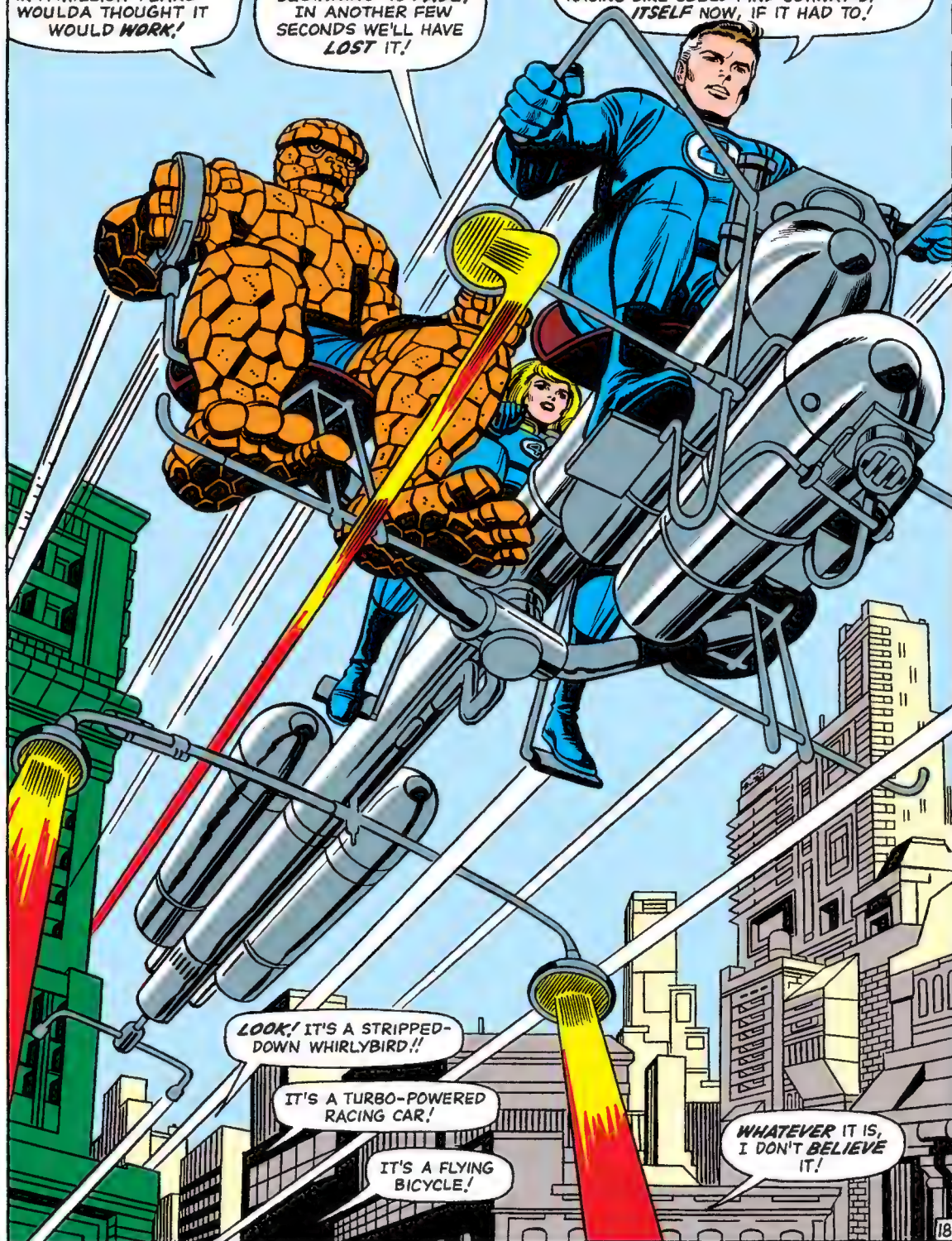


WITHIN SECONDS, THE LATEST OF REED RICHARDS' BRILLIANT SCIENTIFIC CREATIONS MAKES ITS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE, AS THE SUPERBLY MANEUVERABLE **AIRJET-CYCLE** STREAKS ACROSS THE CITY, DARTING BETWEEN BUILDINGS, HEDGE-HOPPING OVER ROOFTOPS, NOISELESSLY HELD ALOFT BY POWERFUL, SHOCK-ABSORBING CUSHIONS OF JET AIR--!!

STRETCHO, I GOTTA HAND IT TO YA! I NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS WOULD'VE THOUGHT IT WOULD *WORK*!

FASTER, DARLING! THE FLARE IS BEGINNING TO *FADE*! IN ANOTHER FEW SECONDS WE'LL HAVE *LOST* IT!

NOT A CHANCE, HONEY! THE BUILT-IN AUTOMATIC COMPENSATOR IS ALREADY ZEROED-IN ON THE SPOT! THIS SPACE-AGE RACING BIKE COULD FIND JOHNNY BY *ITSELF* NOW, IF IT HAD TO!



LOOK! IT'S A STRIPPED-DOWN WHIRLYBIRD!!

IT'S A TURBO-POWERED RACING CAR!

IT'S A FLYING BICYCLE!

WHATEVER IT IS, I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

TRUE TO REED'S PREDICTION, THE AIRJET-CYCLE SETS DOWN EXACTLY ON TARGET, WHERE THEY FIND...

COME QUICK! I FOUND MEDUSA-- AND GORGON-- AND WHAT LOOKS LIKE A WHOLE RACE OF INHUMANS!!

JOHNNY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

INHUMANS?? THEN MY SUSPICION WAS CORRECT! MEDUSA AND GORGON ARE RELATED IN SOME STRANGE WAY!

AT LEAST SHE DIDN'T SAY "WHAT'S A NICE KID LIKE YOU DOIN' IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?"

LEAD US TO THEM, JOHNNY-- FAST!

WE'VE GOTTA BE CAREFUL! THEY HAVE A GIANT DOG NAMED LOCKJAW WHO POPS UP OUT OF NOWHERE-- AND THERE'S SOME CHARACTER NAMED BLACK BOLT THAT I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN YET--!

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN', BOY! IT SOUNDS LIKE A GAG!

EASY, BEN-- HE'S NOT KIDDING!

THEY'RE ALL HIDDEN SOMEWHERE DOWN BELOW!

THERE! THAT'S PART OF THE ENTRANCE!

SOMEHOW I FEEL AS THOUGH THERE ARE UNSEEN EYES WATCHING US!

WHY ARE THEY ALL SO JITTERY? HOW CAN WE BUMP INTO ANYTHING THAT I CAN'T HANDLE??

THEY DON'T SUSPECT THAT WE'RE ON THE ROOFTOPS NOW!

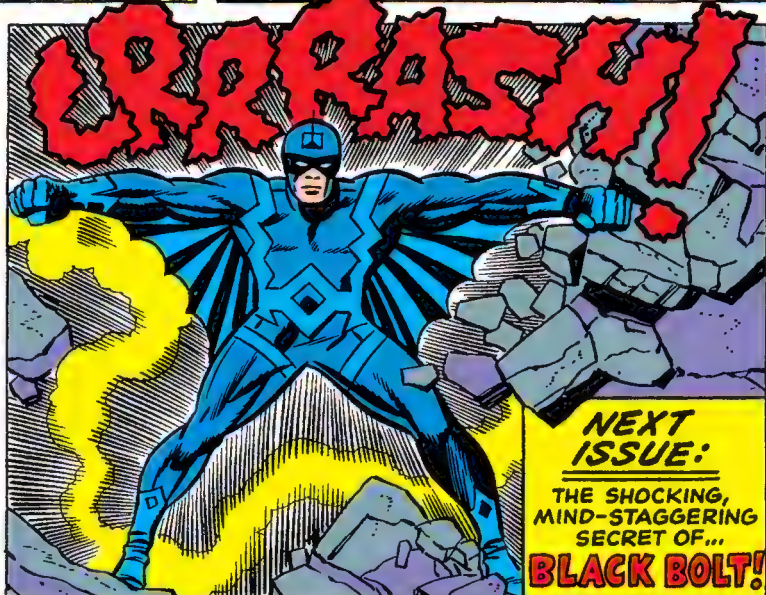
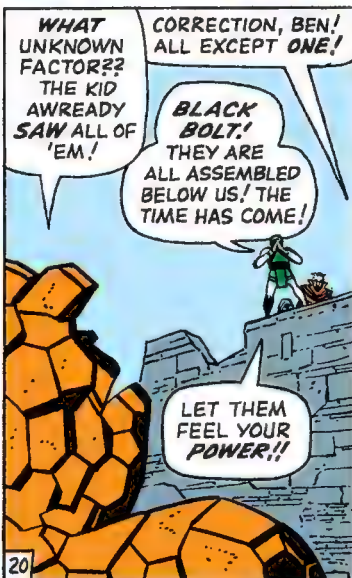
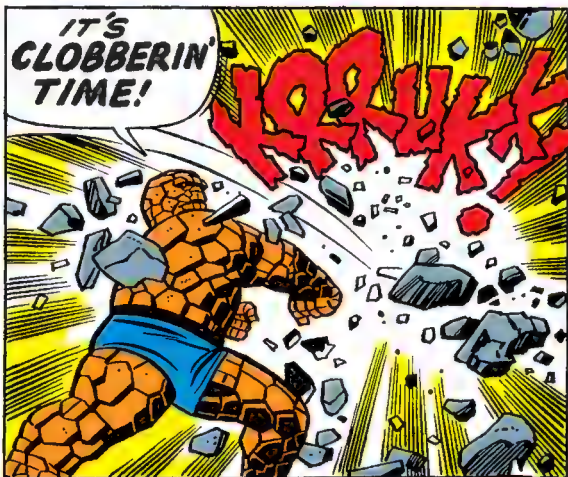
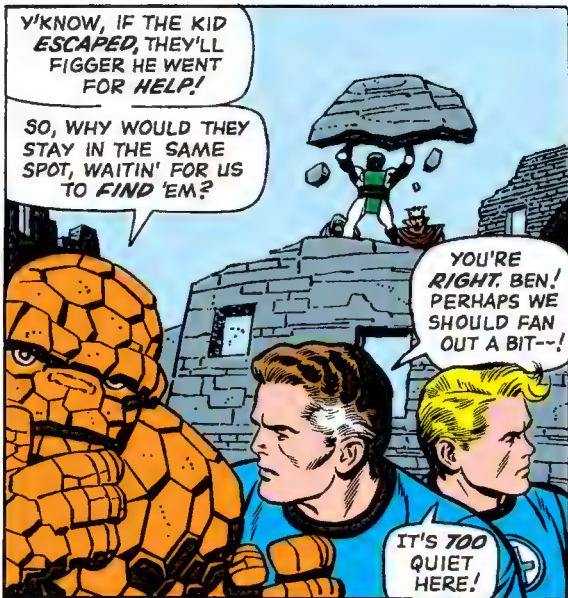
THEY'RE DIRECTLY BELOW US, KARNAK! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!

STAND BACK, GORGON!

THERE! BY PROBING THE WALL UNTIL I FIND ITS WEAKEST SPOT, I CAN EASILY REMOVE A SECTION WITH ONE SKILLFULLY PLACED CHOP!

THTIPP!

PERFECT!



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

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Fantastic Four

IND.



"THOSE
WHO WOULD
DESTROY
US!"

INTRODUCING :
THE MYSTERY OF
The SEEKER!

THE FABULOUS F.F. ARE SHOCKED AT THE STAGGERING POWER OF...

"THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY US!"

HE'S AS DANGEROUS AS I FEARED!

SEEING THAT THEIR HIDING PLACE BENEATH THE CITY HAS BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE F.F., THE INCREDIBLE BAND OF INHUMANS STRIKES BACK, LED BY THE MYSTERIOUS BEING KNOWN AS-- **BLACK BOLT!**

HE MANAGED TO STAGGER THE *THING* WITH ONE BLOW!

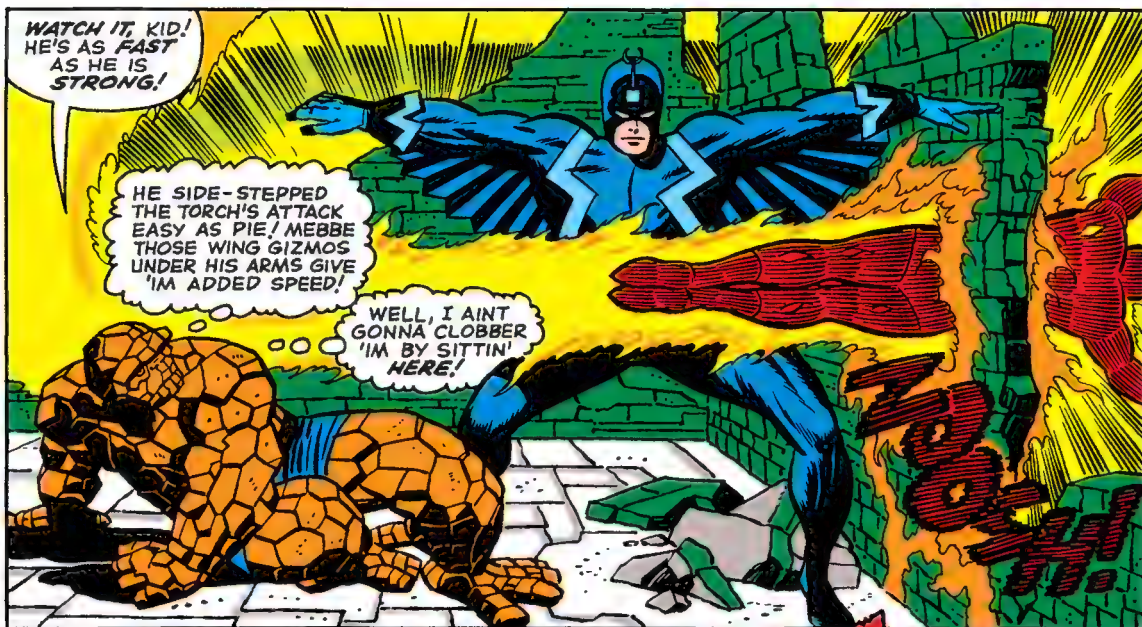
BEN! ARE YOU HURT?!

ONLY MY PRIDE, LADY!

--BUT I BETTER NOT HOLD OFF ANY LONGER!

REED SIGNALLLED ME TO BUTT OUT TILL WE SEE WHAT BLACK BOLT CAN DO AGAINST BENJY!

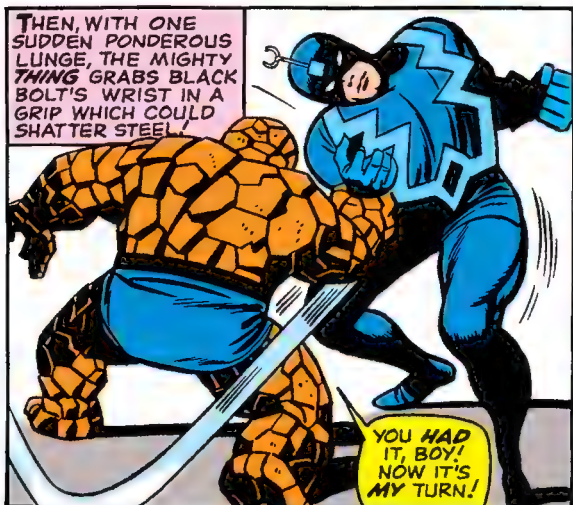
STORY BY OUR LEADER,
STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY OUR IDOL,
JACK KIRBY
INKING BY OUR STAR,
JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING BY OUR LETTERER,
ARTIE SIMEK



WATCH IT, KID!
HE'S AS FAST
AS HE IS
STRONG!

HE SIDE-STEPPED
THE TORCH'S ATTACK
EASY AS PIE! MEBBE
THOSE WING GIZMOS
UNDER HIS ARMS GIVE
'IM ADDED SPEED!

WELL, I AINT
GONNA CLOBBER
'IM BY SITTING
HERE!



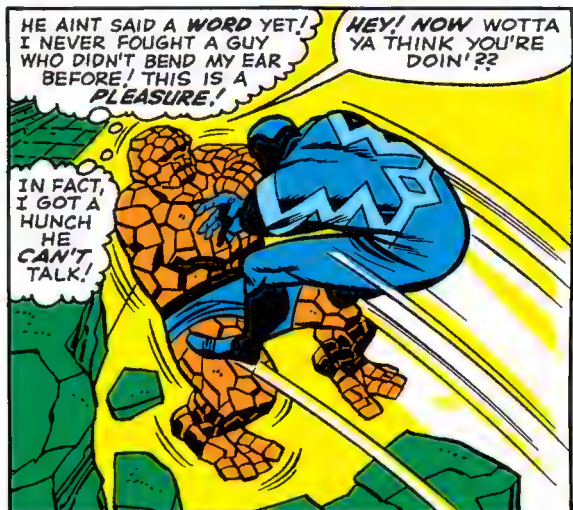
THEN, WITH ONE
SUDDEN PONDEROUS
LUNGE, THE MIGHTY
THING GRABS BLACK
BOLT'S WRIST IN A
GRIP WHICH COULD
SHATTER STEEL.

YOU HAD
IT, BOY!
NOW IT'S
MY TURN!



THOK!

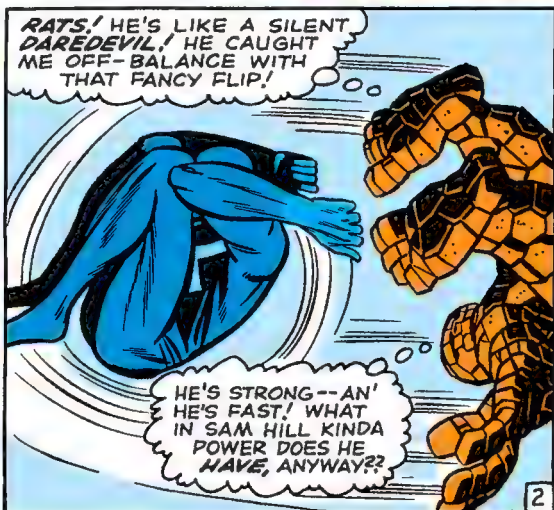
NICE TRY,
TOUGH
GUY--BUT
THIS
TIME I'M
BRACED
FOR YA!



HE AINT SAID A WORD YET!
I NEVER FOUGHT A GUY
WHO DIDN'T BEND MY EAR
BEFORE! THIS IS A
PLEASURE!

HEY! NOW WOTTA
YA THINK YOU'RE
DOIN'??

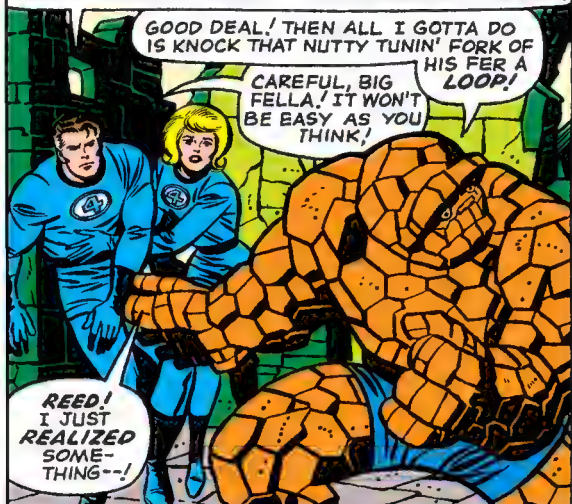
IN FACT,
I GOT A
HUNCH
HE
CAN'T
TALK!



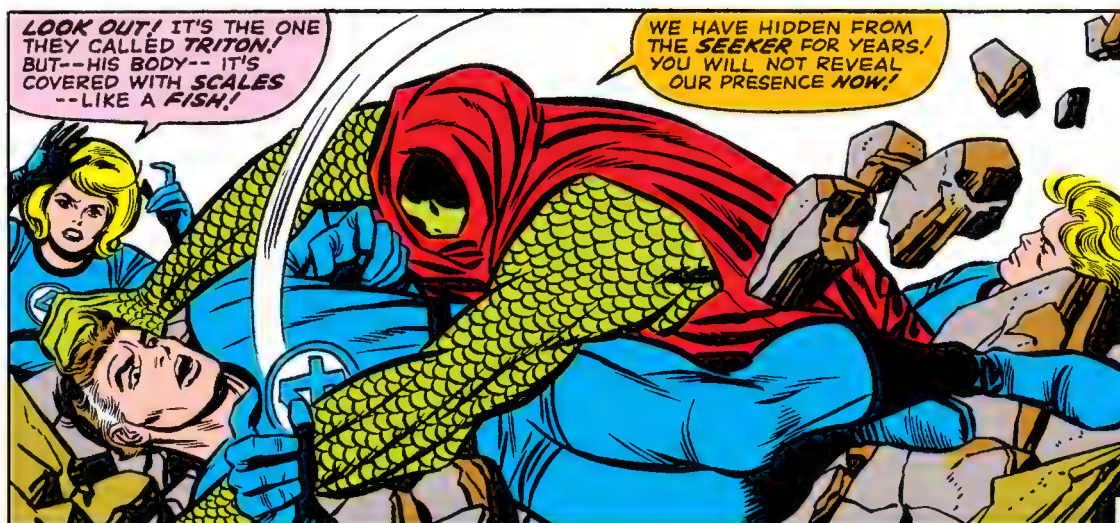
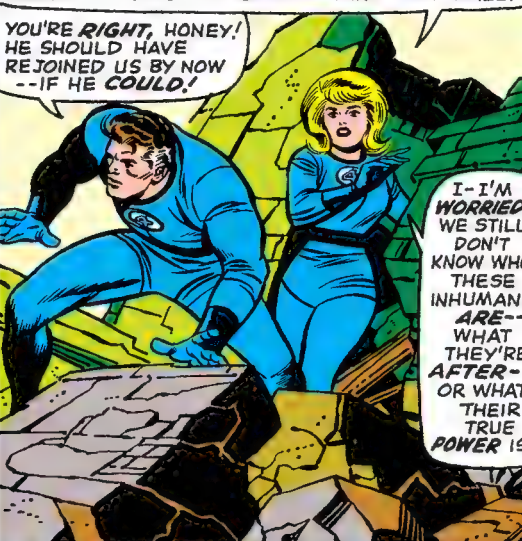
RATS! HE'S LIKE A SILENT
DAREDEVIL! HE CAUGHT
ME OFF-BALANCE WITH
THAT FANCY FLIP!

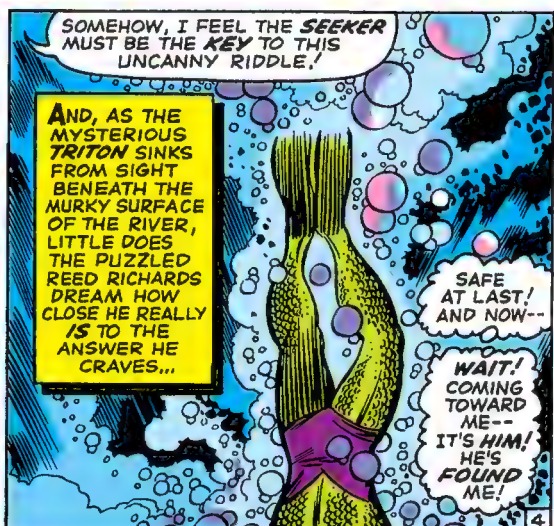
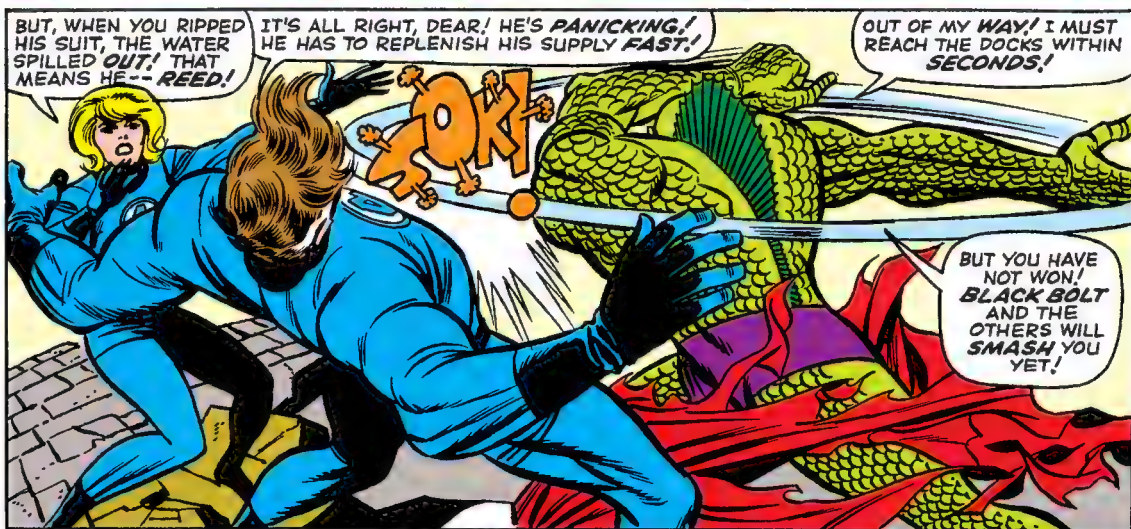
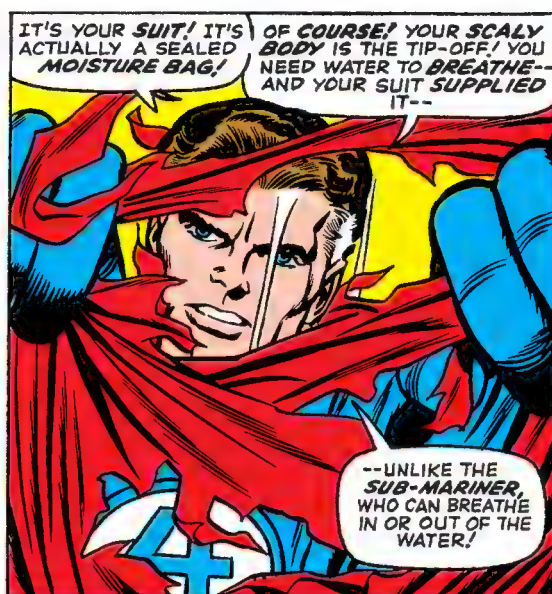
HE'S STRONG--AN'
HE'S FAST! WHAT
IN SAM HILL KINDA
POWER DOES HE
HAVE, ANYWAY??

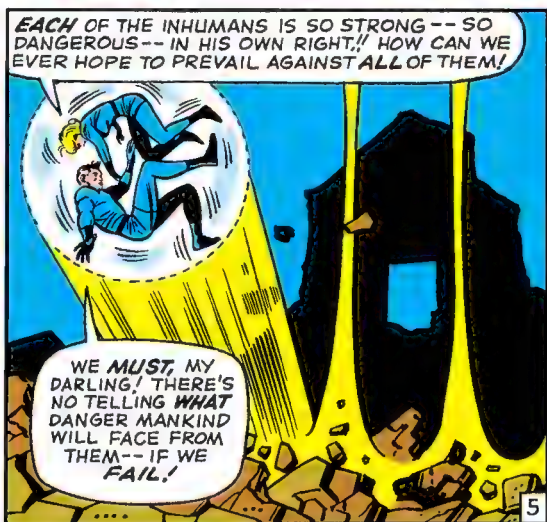
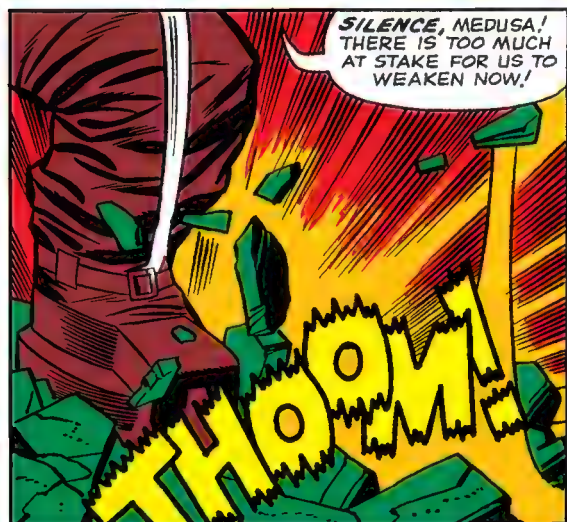
THANKS, BEN! YOU GAVE ME TIME TO MAKE A QUICK ANALYSIS! THAT **ANTENNA** DEVICE ON BLACK BOLT'S HEAD SEEMS TO ABSORB ENERGY FROM THE **ELECTRONS** AROUND HIM, AND CONVERT IT INTO SPEED AND STRENGTH!

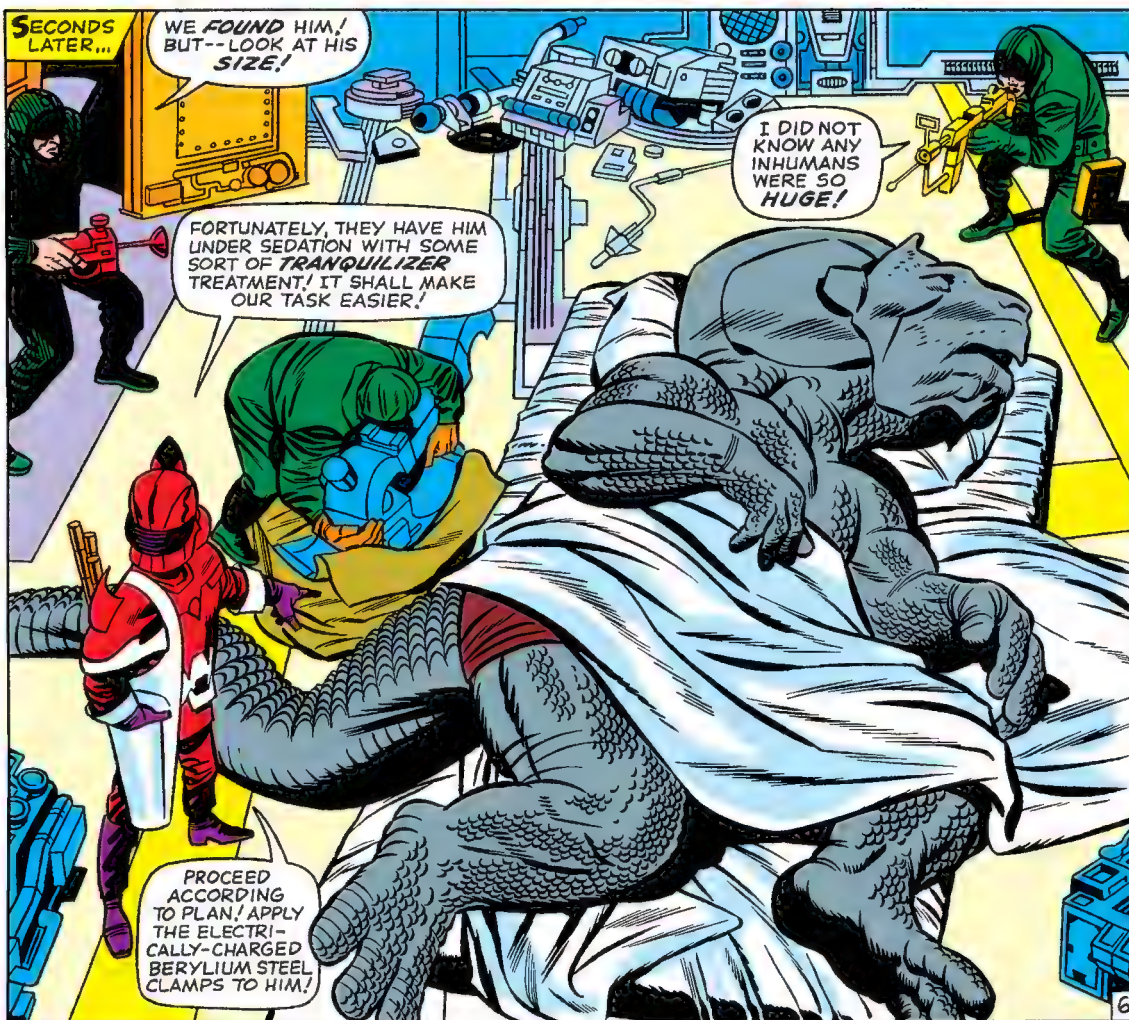
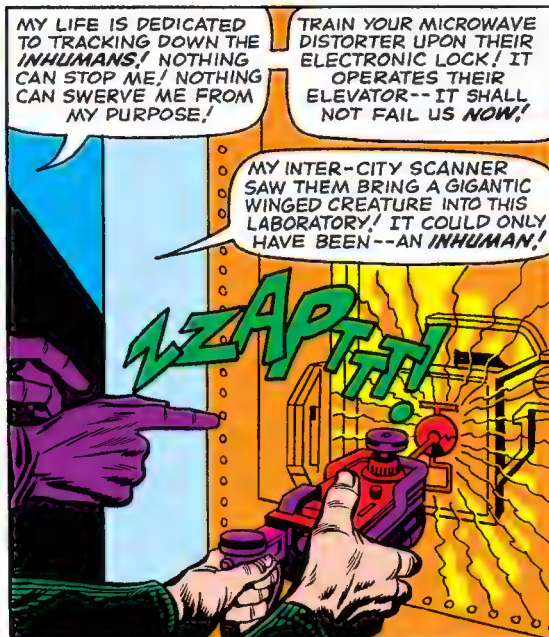


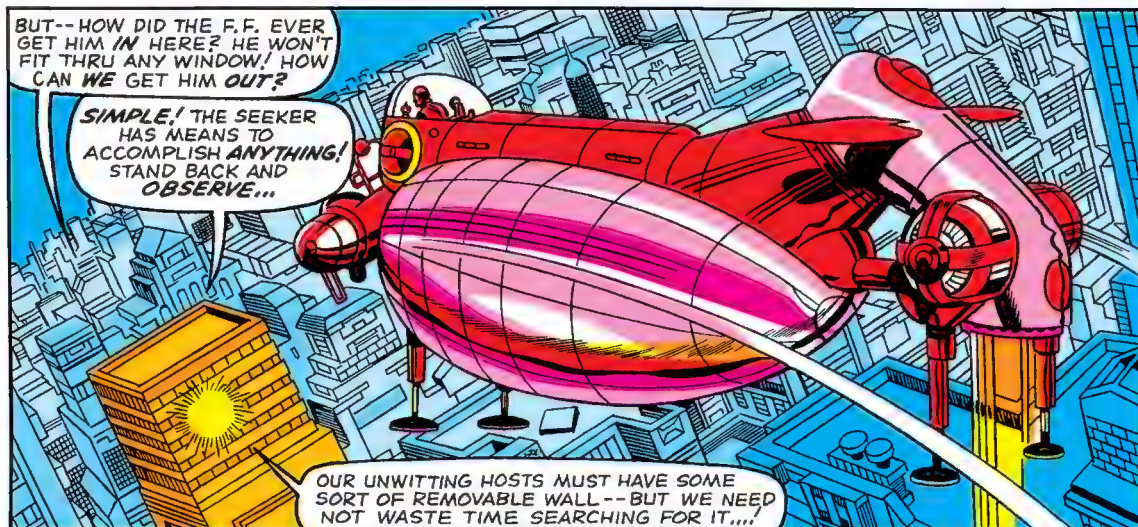
WHAT HAPPENED TO **JOHNNY**? WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE HE BLAZED THRU THAT WALL!

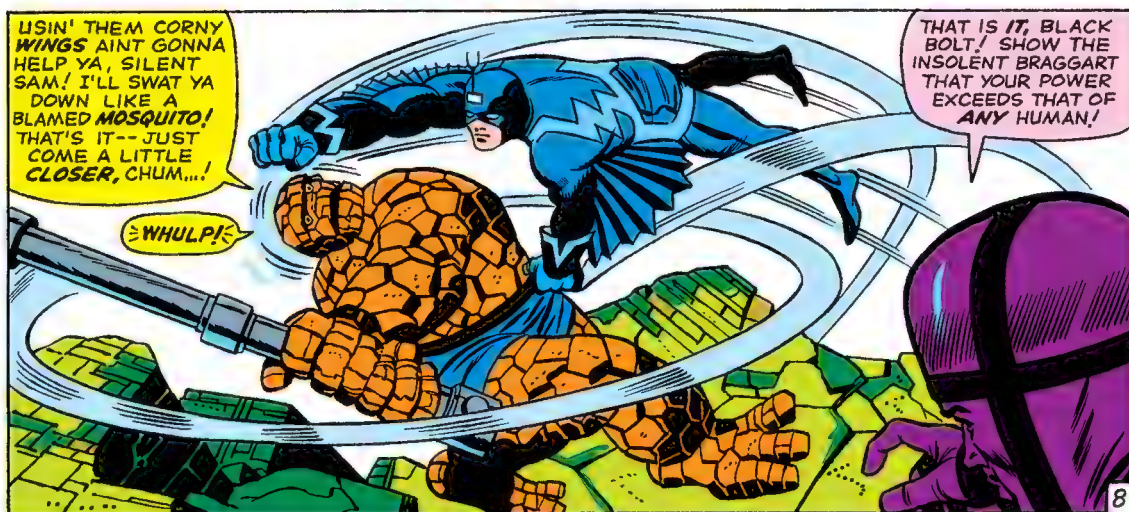
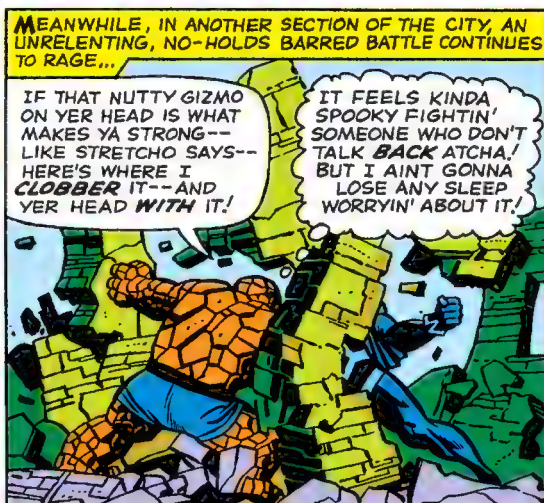
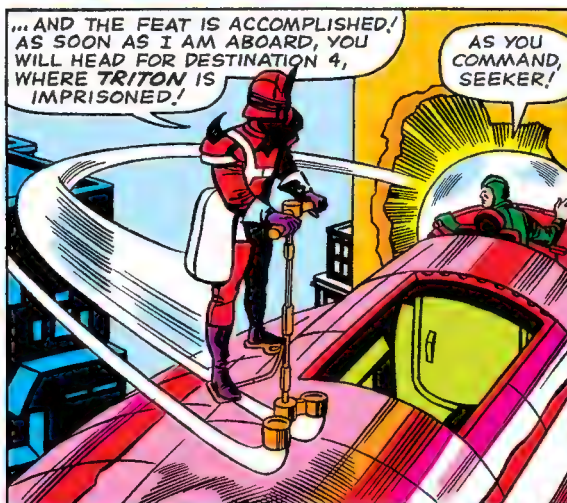












NIMBLY, ALMOST EFFORTLESSLY, THE SILENT INHUMAN EVADES HIS SLOWER, MORE PONDEROUS FOE...

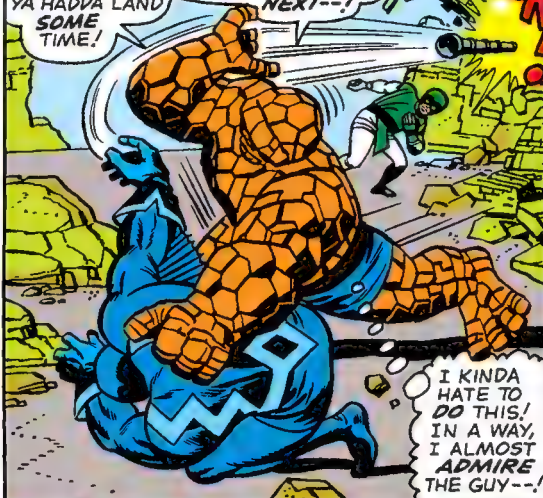


IF WE WUZ PLAYIN' LEAP FROG, YA'D WIN HANDS DOWN, YA BLAMED JUMPIN' JACK....!

HAH! BUT WE AINT PLAYIN' LEAP FROG-- AND I KNEW YA HADDA LAND SOME TIME!

NOW, I'LL UNLOAD THAT BLASTED PIPE! I WON'T NEED IT FOR WHAT COMES NEXT--!

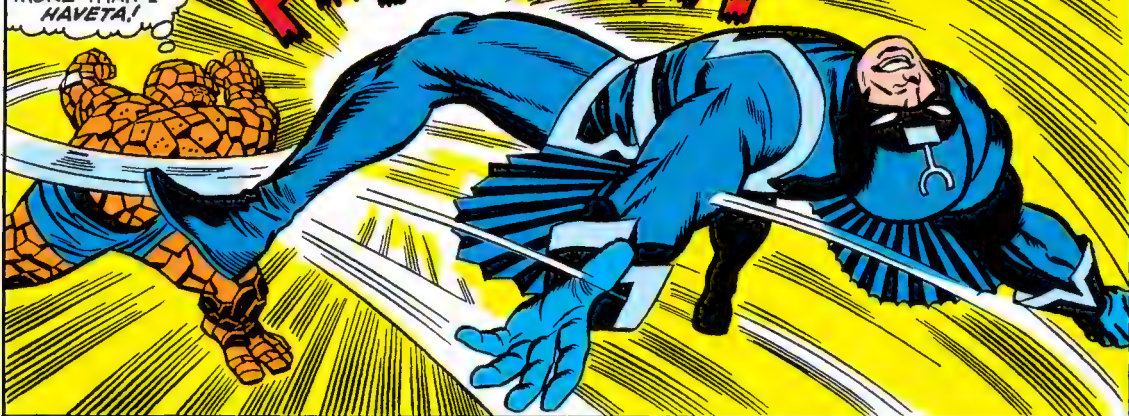
THOK!



I KINDA HATE TO DO THIS! IN A WAY, I ALMOST ADMIRE THE GUY--!

I'LL PULL MY PUNCH A LITTLE --NO SENSE HURTIN' 'IM ANY MORE THAN I HAVETA!

PUH-POW!



EVEN THOUGH I HELD BACK A LITTLE, I STILL WHUMPED 'IM HARD ENOUGH TA STOP A RHINO! WHAT IN BLAZES IS HE MADE OUTTA??

IF ONLY HE'D TALK --IF HE'D SAY SOMETHIN'! I ALMOST FORGOT WHAT WE'RE FIGHTIN' ABOUT!



LOOK! WHY DON'CHA SETTLE DOWN AND LET REED RICHARDS TALK THINGS OVER WITH YA??

OKAY, MISTER-- I TRIED! IF YA THINK THERE'S STILL A CHANCE FOR YA BY GRABBIN' MY ARM--

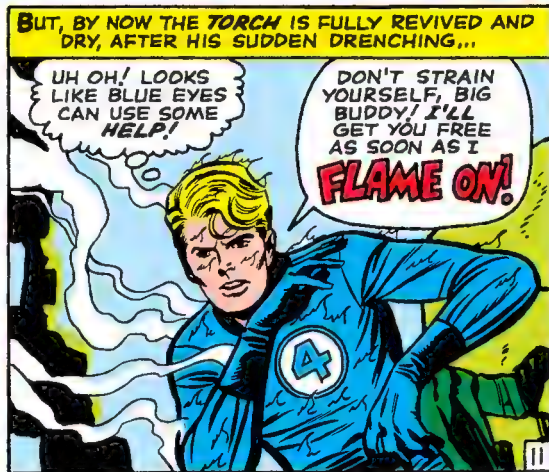
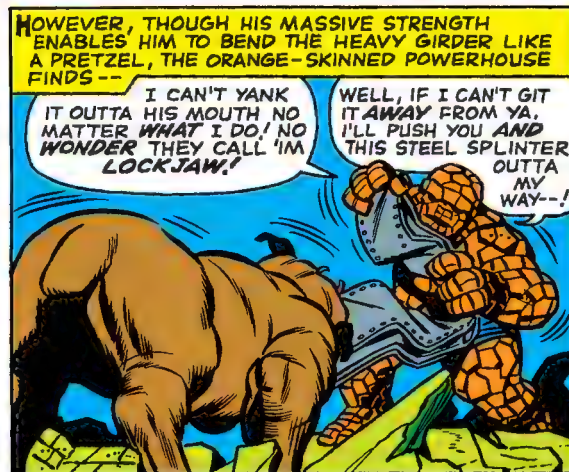
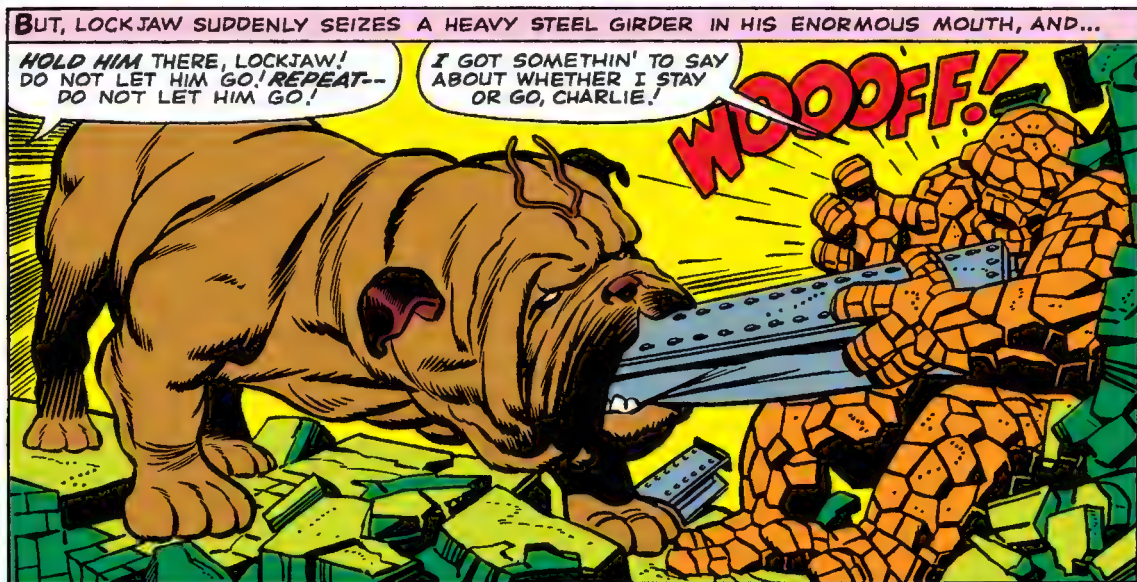
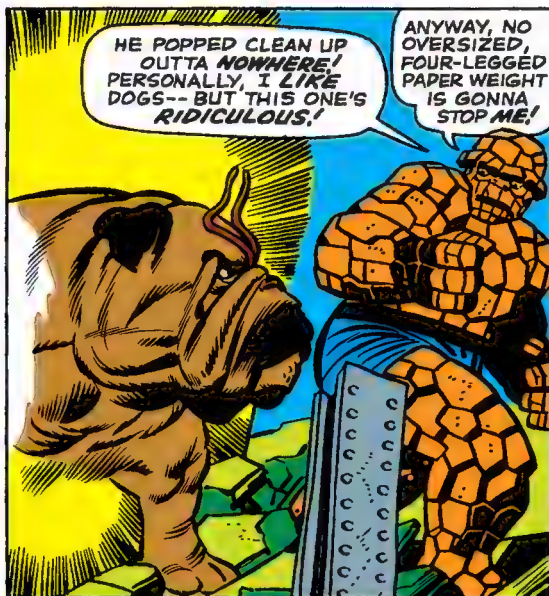
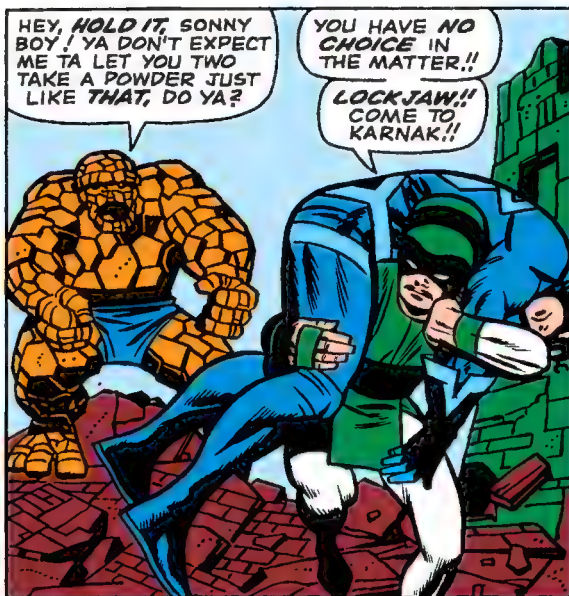


YOU SURE GOT ANOTHER THINK COMIN'!!!

KRAK!







NOT BAD, KID! IT'S ABOUT
TIME YA MADE YERSELF
USEFUL AROUND HERE!

NOT BAD, KID! IT'S ABOUT
TIME YA MADE YERSELF
USEFUL AROUND HERE!

REED--HOW MUCH **LONGER**
WILL GORGON KEEP US OFF-
BALANCE THIS WAY BY
STAMPING THAT AWFUL
FOOT OF HIS??

WE WARNED YOU NOT TO ENTER THE
WORLD OF HUMANS, MEDUSA! BECAUSE
OF YOU, WE'VE BEEN **DISCOVERED!**
SEE WHAT YOUR DISOBEDIENCE HAS
BROUGHT US!

**BUT--YOU
HAVEN'T
GIVEN
THEM A
CHANCE!**

I DON'T KNOW, MONEY! BUT, HE'S ONLY DOING IT OUT OF FEAR! THEY THINK WE WANT TO HURT THEM!

SO LONG AS WE'RE SAFE
IN YOUR FORCE FIELD,
WE'LL LET HIM GET IT OUT
OF HIS SYSTEM. / PERHAPS
WE CAN REASON WITH THEM
WHEN THEY CALM DOWN!

GORGON! BLACK BOLT'S ELECTRON CHARGE IS SPENT! WE WILL BE WITHOUT HIS POWER FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES!

NO MATTER! ANOTHER FEW MINUTES IS ALL WE MAY *NEED*! I FEEL WE ARE

NO MATTER! ANOTHER FEW MINUTES IS ALL WE MAY *NEED!* I FEEL WE ARE CLOSE TO *VICTORY* AT LAST! WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR DEFEATED, OUR SECRET

**BUT, WHAT ABOUT-- THE
SEEKER?**

HE HAS
NOT FOUND
US YET! WITH
LUCK, HE
NEVER WILL!

**WILL BE
SAFE
AGAIN!**

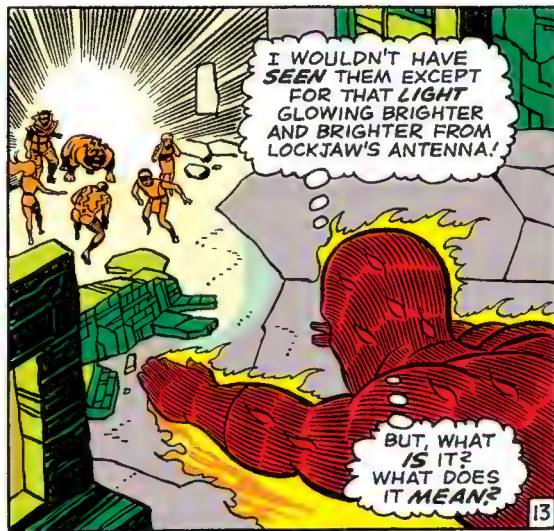
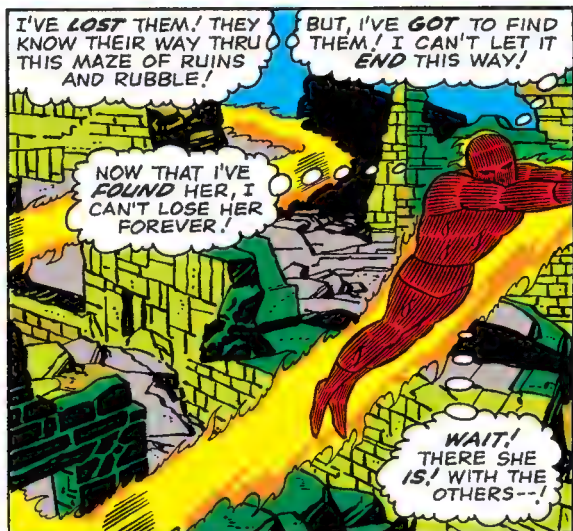
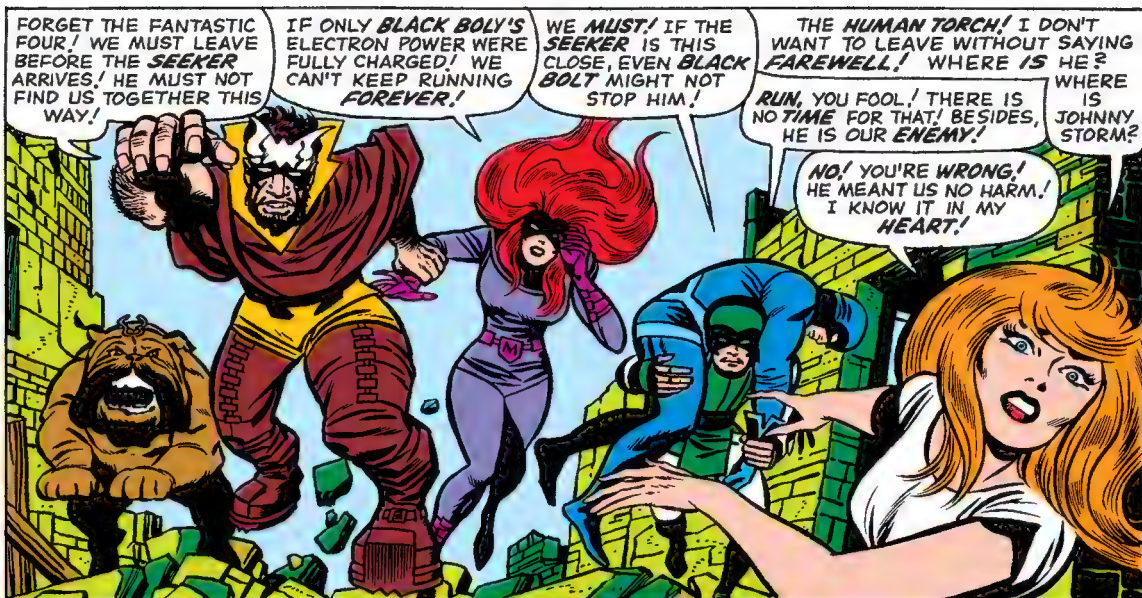
**CRYSTAL!
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT'S
WRONG?**

IT'S TRITON! THERE IS NO TRACE OF HIM IN THE WATER! IT CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING--!

**THE SEEKER.
HE FOUND
HIM!**

HE'S
CLOSER
THAN WE
THOUGHT!

AND BLACK
BOLT CANNOT
HELP US NOW!



SUDDENLY, A STRANGE OPENING SEEMS TO APPEAR-- IN THE EMPTY AIR-- LIKE THE ENTRANCE TO SOME MYSTERIOUS, UNKNOWN DIMENSION--!

WE'VE DONE IT! THEY'LL NEVER CATCH US NOW!

JOHNNY! JOHNNY! I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU! I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU--NO MATTER WHAT--! JOHNNY--!

NO, GORGON! TAKE US IF YOU MUST--BUT LEAVE CRYSTAL! GIVE HER THE CHANCE--TO LIVE LIKE-- A HUMAN!

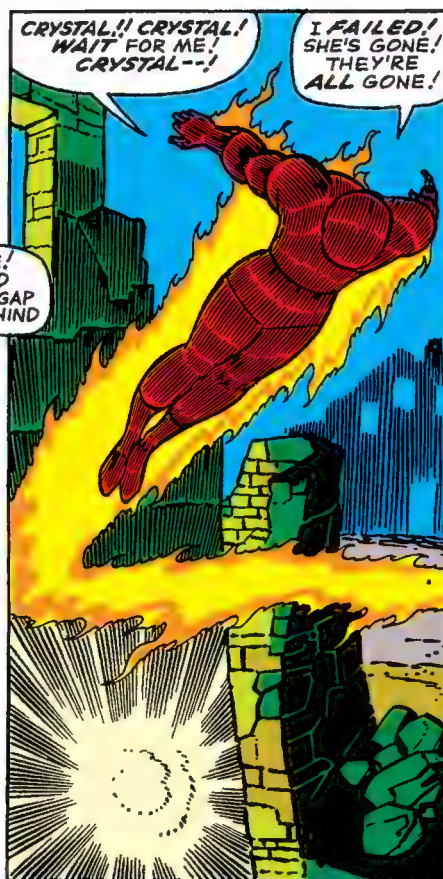
NEVER! EACH DESERTION FROM OUR RANKS WEAKENS US! WE MUST STAY TOGETHER!

BLACK BOLT! YOU CAN HELP ME! LET ME REMAIN--WITH JOHNNY STORM! PLEASE, BLACK BOLT!

IT IS TOO LATE! HE IS STILL WEAK--AND THE DIMENSION GAP IS CLOSING BEHIND US!

CRYSTAL!! CRYSTAL! WAIT FOR ME! CRYSTAL--!

I FAILED! SHE'S GONE! THEY'RE ALL GONE!



THAT MUST BE HOW THE DOG, LOCKJAW, SEEMED TO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR AT WILL! HIS ANTENNA CREATES SOME SORT OF MENTAL DIMENSION DISPLACER FORCE!

CALL IT WHATEVER YOU WANT--! WE'VE LOST THEM! I-I'LL NEVER SEE CRYSTAL AGAIN....!

DON'T COUNT ON THAT, JOHNNY! WE'RE GOING TO SEE THIS THRU! THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR US TO FORGET ABOUT THE WHOLE THING!

IF YOU CAN FIGGER ANY OF THIS OUT, STRETCHO, YER AS SMART AS YA THINK YOU ARE! TO ME, IT'S LIKE THE KINDA DREAM YA HAVE AFTER EATIN' PICKLES 'N GOOSEBERRIES!

THEY VANISHED--RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!



BUT WHERE?? WHERE CAN THEY HAVE GONE??

I'LL FIND THAT OUT, LAD... I SWEAR IT! I REALIZE NOW THAT THEY ARE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TYPE OF LIFE WHICH EVOLVED WITHOUT MANKIND KNOWING IT-- AND THEY'VE COMBINED ALL THEIR INHUMAN POWERS FOR THEIR MUTUAL SAFETY!

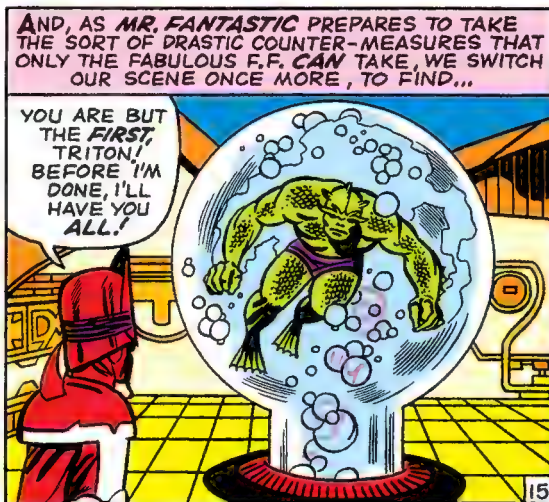
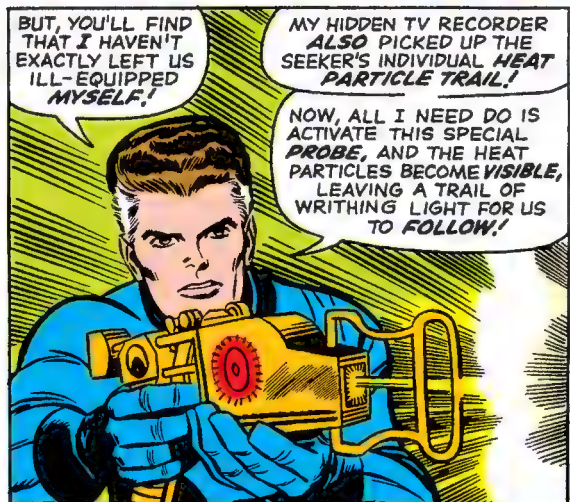
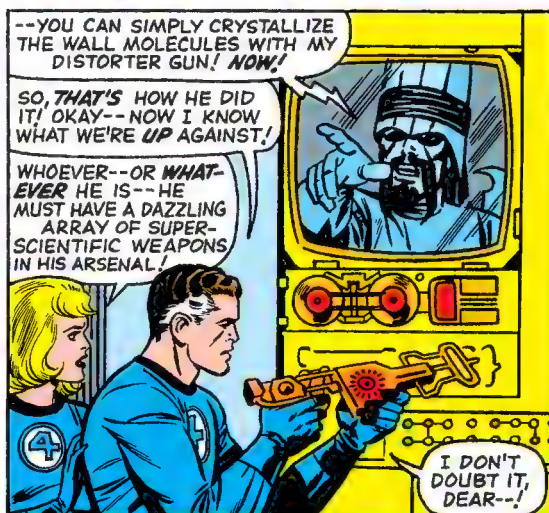
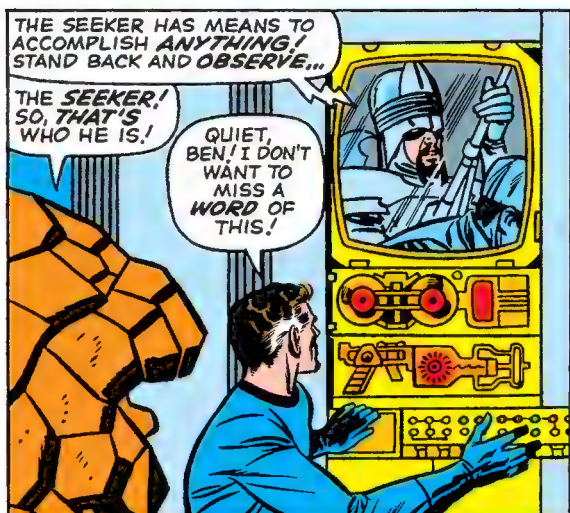
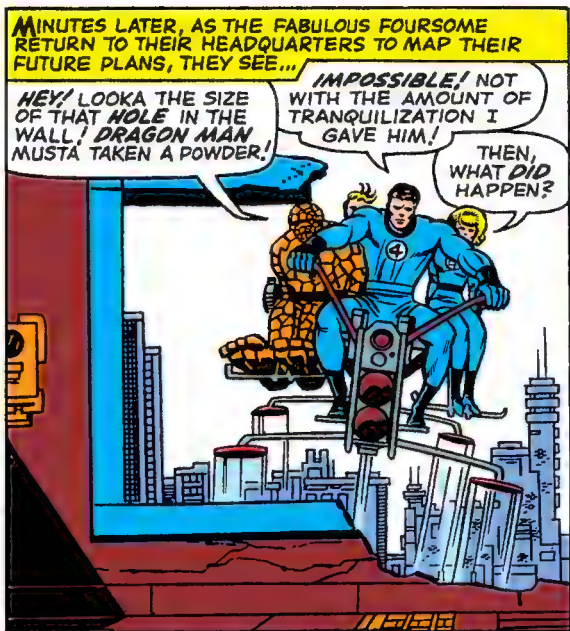
THEN MEDUSA WASN'T SOME SORT OF FREAK-- BUT RATHER PART OF A STRANGE UNSUSPECTED RACE!

NOBODY CAN TELL ME THAT CRYSTAL ISN'T AS HUMAN AS ANY OF US!

THEN WHERE DOES THAT NUTTY SEEKER FIT IN??

THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE I INTEND TO FIND OUT!





NEVER! YOU'LL NEVER SEND US BACK TO THE GREAT REFUGE! WE WANT TO REMAIN HERE! WE WANT TO LIVE FREE!

SUCH TALK IS TREASON! YOUR PLACE IS NOT AMONG HUMANS! YOU MUST BE DISCIPLINED!



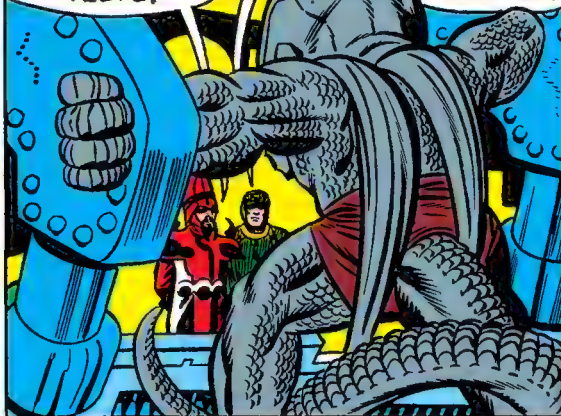
ADD THE FLUID OF DARKNESS TO TRITON'S WATERY CAGE! LET HIM REMAIN SO UNTIL HE VOWS TO OFFER NO RESISTANCE!



AND NOW, I MUST INSPECT OUR OTHER CAPTIVE...

HE IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS! GOOD! HAVE YOU COMPLETED THE TESTS?

YES! AND THEY PROVE CONCLUSIVELY HE IS NOT AN INHUMAN--MERELY AN ARTIFICIAL ANDROID LIFE FORM!



THEN DISPOSE OF HIM! HE IS OF NO FURTHER INTEREST TO ME! I SEEK ONLY INHUMANS!

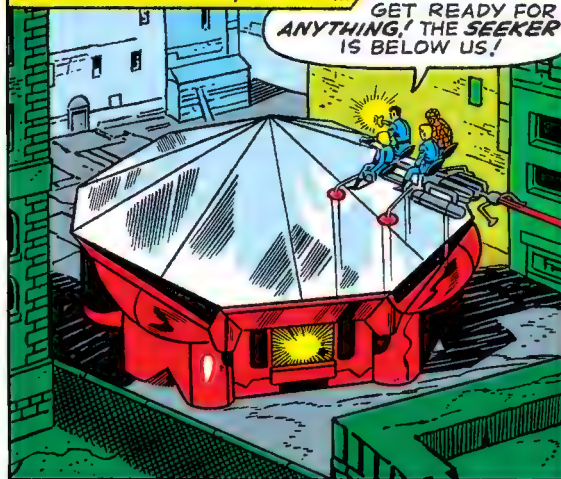
I DO NOT KNOW IF ANY OF OUR WEAPONS CAN HARM HIM! MAY WE NOT MERELY RELEASE HIM?

IT MATTERS NOT--SO LONG AS WE ARE RID OF HIM!



BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, FOLLOWING THE SEEKER'S HEAT PARTICLE TRAIL, WE FIND...

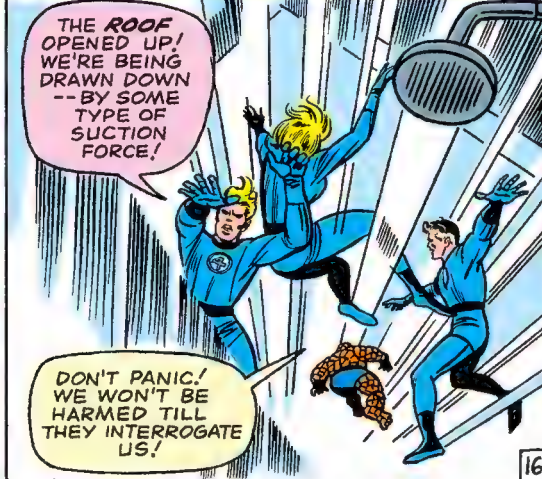
GET READY FOR ANYTHING! THE SEEKER IS BELOW US!

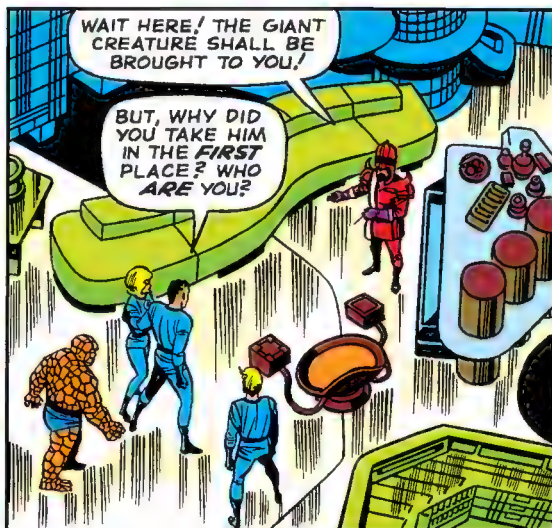
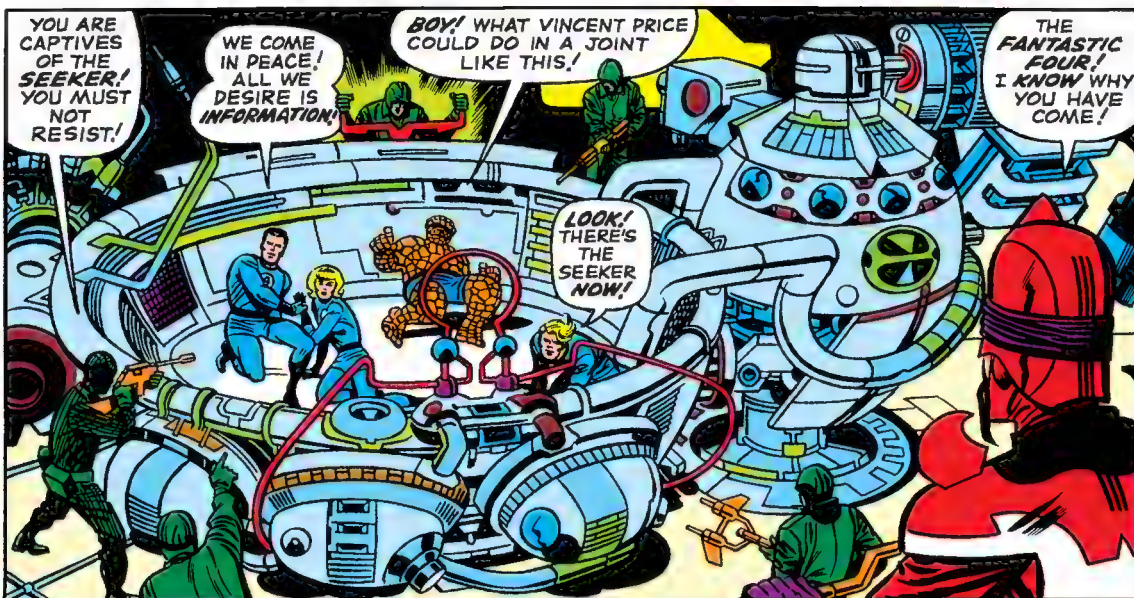


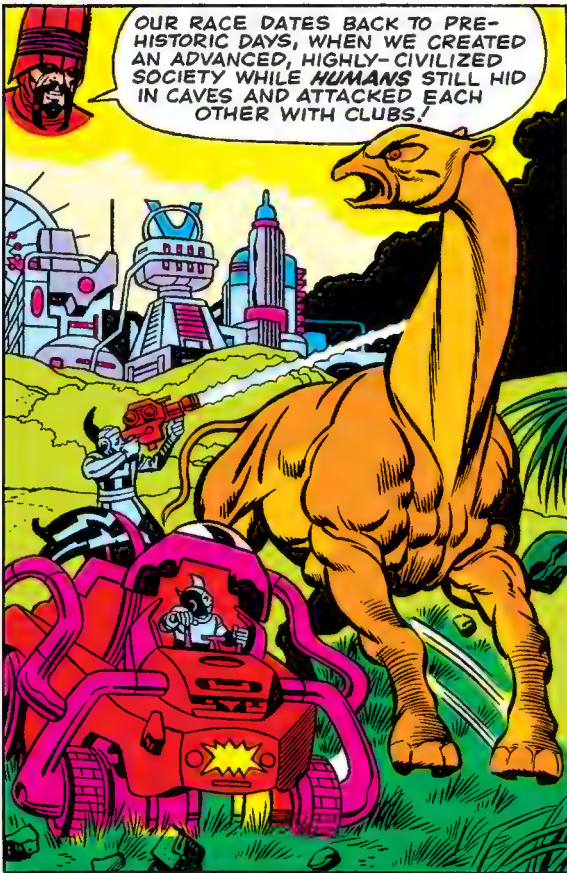
BUT, BEFORE THEY CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE...

THE ROOF OPENED UP! WE'RE BEING DRAWN DOWN --BY SOME TYPE OF SUCTION FORCE!

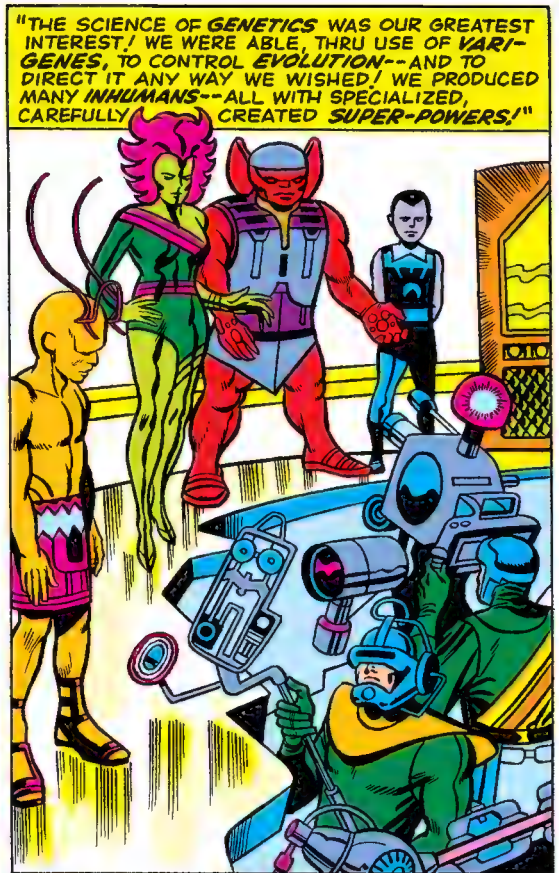
DON'T PANIC! WE WON'T BE HARMED TILL THEY INTERROGATE US!



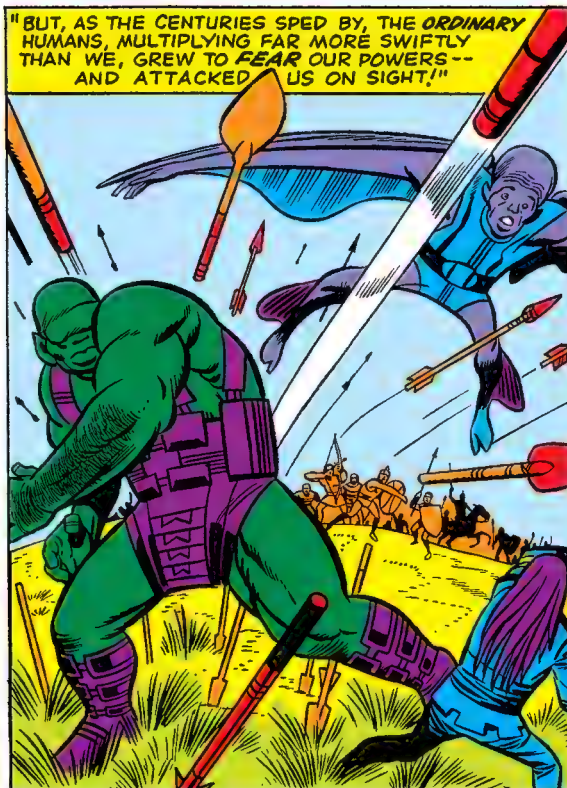




OUR RACE DATES BACK TO PRE-HISTORIC DAYS, WHEN WE CREATED AN ADVANCED, HIGHLY-CIVILIZED SOCIETY WHILE HUMANS STILL HID IN CAVES AND ATTACKED EACH OTHER WITH CLUBS!



"THE SCIENCE OF **GENETICS** WAS OUR GREATEST INTEREST! WE WERE ABLE, THRU USE OF **VARI-GENES**, TO CONTROL **EVOLUTION**--AND TO DIRECT IT ANY WAY WE WISHED! WE PRODUCED MANY **INHUMANS**--ALL WITH SPECIALIZED, CAREFULLY CREATED **SUPER-POWERS**!"



"BUT, AS THE CENTURIES SPED BY, THE **ORDINARY HUMANS**, MULTIPLYING FAR MORE SWIFTLY THAN WE, GREW TO **FEAR** OUR POWERS--AND ATTACKED US ON SIGHT!"



HAVING NO WISH TO WASTE OUR ENERGIES IN USELESS BATTLE WITH PRIMITIVE HUMANS, OUR LEADERS BUILT THE **GREAT REFUGE**, TO SHELTER US--TO SAFEGUARD OUR SUPREME SPECIES!

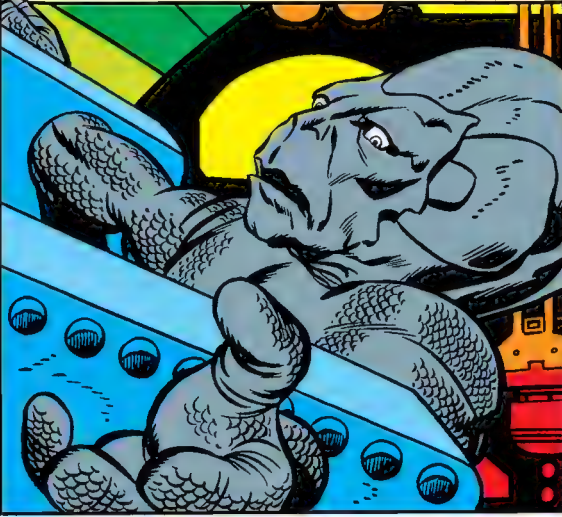
THEN, *THAT'S* WHY GORGON TRIED TO CAPTURE MEDUSA! SHE HAD *ESCAPED* FROM THE INHUMANS, AND HE WANTED TO BRING HER *BACK*!

OF COURSE! GORGON, MEDUSA, BLACK BOLT, AND THE OTHERS ARE ONE OF OUR OLDEST FAMILIES! THEY BELONG *TOGETHER*--ALWAYS!

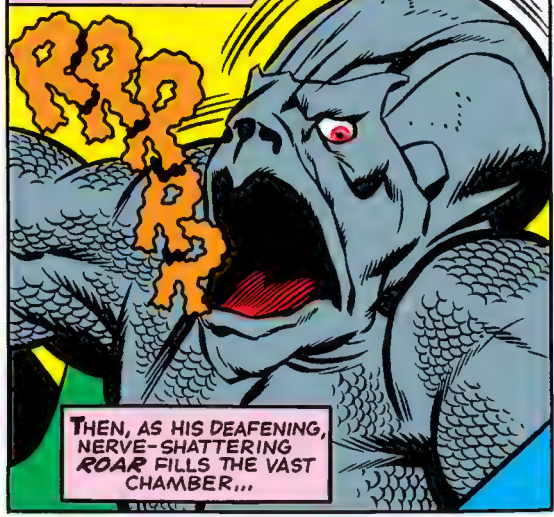
BUT--WHAT OF THE **GREAT REFUGE**? WHERE *IS* IT?

THAT YOU SHALL NEVER KNOW!

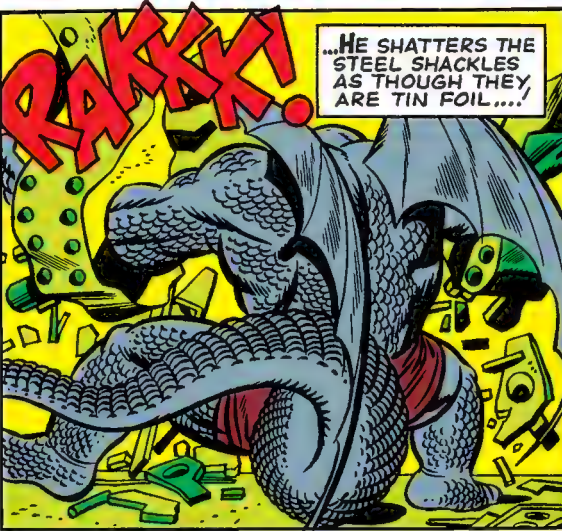
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE STRANGE EDIFICE, THE TRANQUILIZER FINALLY WEARS OFF **DRAGON MAN** AS HIS STRANGE, UNFATHOMABLE BRAIN REALIZES THAT HE HAS BEEN **SHACKLED!**



UNCONTROLLABLE **RAGE** FLOODS THRU EACH FIBRE OF HIS GIGANTIC, ARTIFICIAL FRAME AS HE EXERTS EVERY IOTA OF HIS AWESOME POWER TO **FREE** HIMSELF....!



THEN, AS HIS DEAFENING, NERVE-SHATTERING **ROAR** FILLS THE VAST CHAMBER,...



...HE SHATTERS THE STEEL SHACKLES AS THOUGH THEY ARE TIN FOIL....!



HE'S **FREE!** AND OUR **SHOCK GUNS** ARE **USELESS** AGAINST HIM! **NOTHING** CAN STOP HIM!

LET HIM GO! DON'T STAND IN HIS WAY!

LIKE A RAMPAGING DREADNAUGHT, THE MONSTROUS WINGED CREATURE CHARGES FORTH, SMASHING EVERYTHING IN HIS PATH...



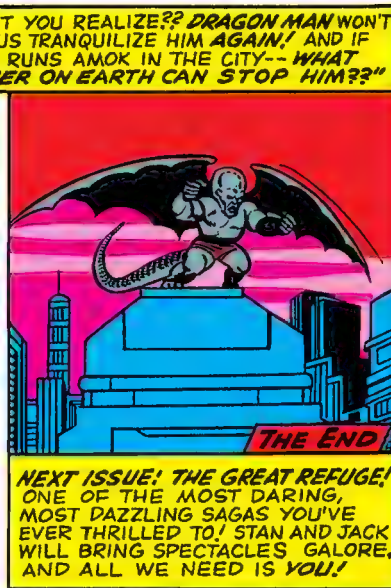
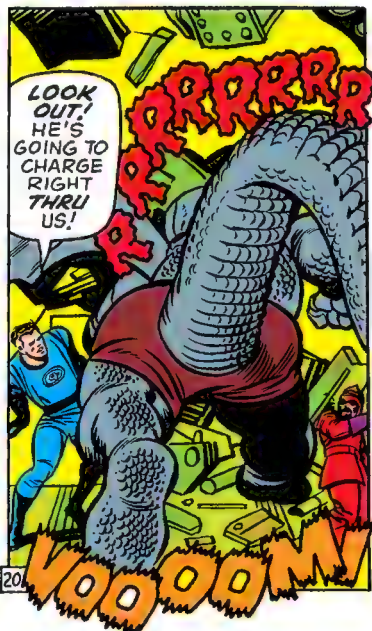
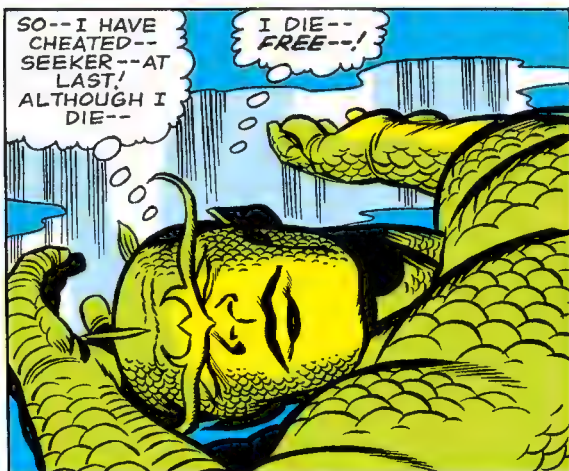
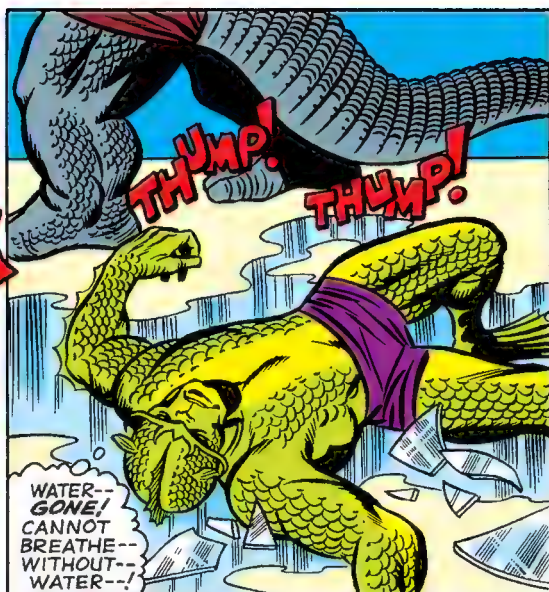
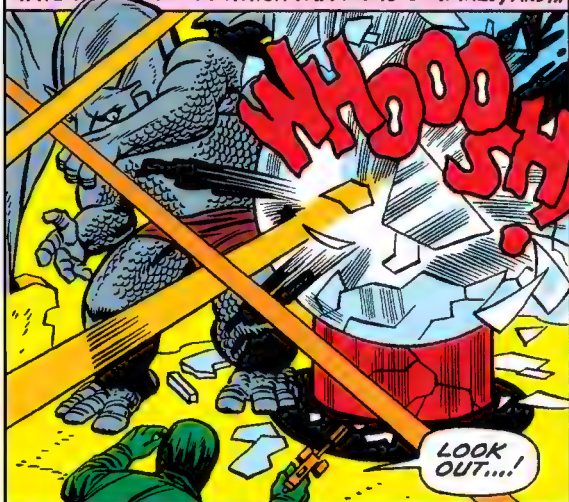
HE'LL CRASH INTO **TRITON'S TANK!**

WE NEED MORE **HELP**--
MORE GUNS!

HE'LL TRAMPLE US **ALL!** STAY OUT OF HIS **PATH!**

HE DOESN'T EVEN **FEEL** OUR **SHOTS!**

BUT THEN, AS THE GUARDS DELIVER A WITHERING BARRAGE OF CROSSFIRE, IN AN EFFORT TO CONFUSE THE GOLIATH, A STRAY SHOCK BLAST STRIKES THE WATER TANK IN WHICH TRITON IS CONFINED, AND...



THE END

NEXT ISSUE! THE GREAT REFUGE!
ONE OF THE MOST DARING, MOST DAZZLING SAGAS YOU'VE EVER THRILLED TO! STAN AND JACK WILL BRING SPECTACLES GALORE, AND ALL WE NEED IS YOU!



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GROUP 12¢

"BEWARE,
THE
HIDDEN
LAND!"

FOUR



THE FABULOUS F.F. ENTER AN INCREDIBLE WORLD OF WONDERS!

BEWARE THE HIDDEN LAND!

THE INHUMANS ARE GONE!
THAT MEANS I'VE LOST
CRYSTAL! BUT--I'LL
FIND HER AGAIN
--SOMEHOW!

WE CAN'T LET
DRAGON MAN RUN
AMOK! THE CITY
WILL BE HELPLESS
BEFORE HIM!

YOU HEARD THE
MAN, LADY! IF YA
GOT A FEW SPARE
MINUTES, IT'S TIME
FER US 'TA SAVE
HUMANITY AGAIN!

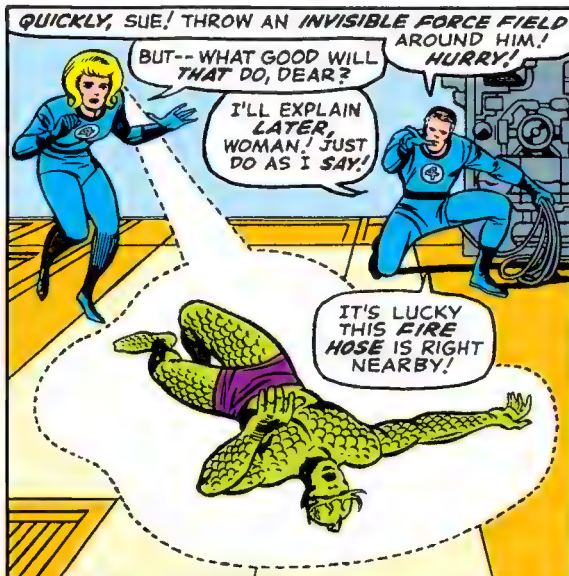
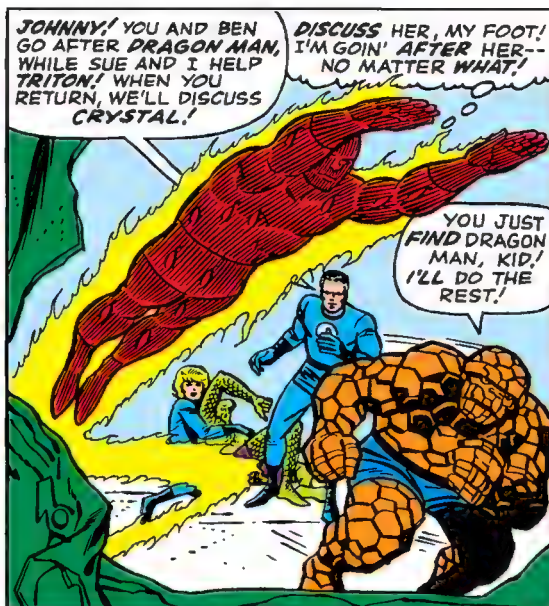
- THE INHUMANS HAVE ESCAPED TO THEIR HIDDEN GREAT REFUGE!
- THE MYSTERIOUS SEEKER HAS PERMITTED DRAGON MAN TO SMASH HIS WAY TO FREEDOM!
- THE F.F. ARE ABOUT TO PURSUE HIM, WHEN THEY SUDDENLY REALIZE--

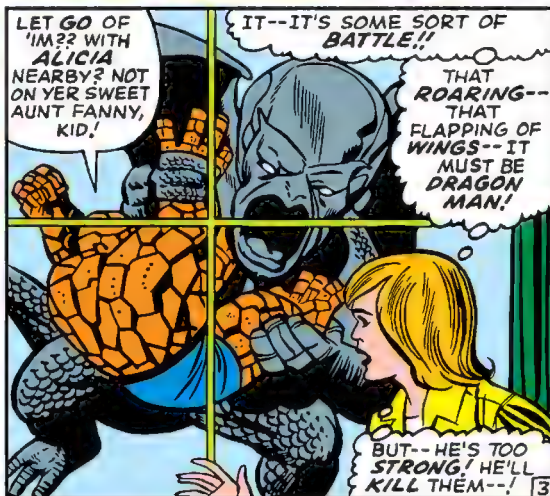
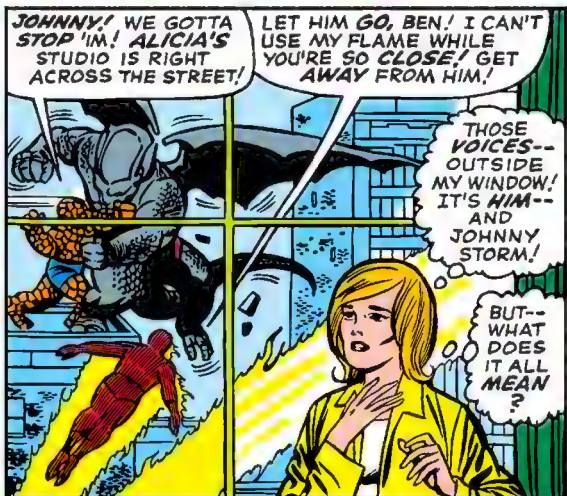
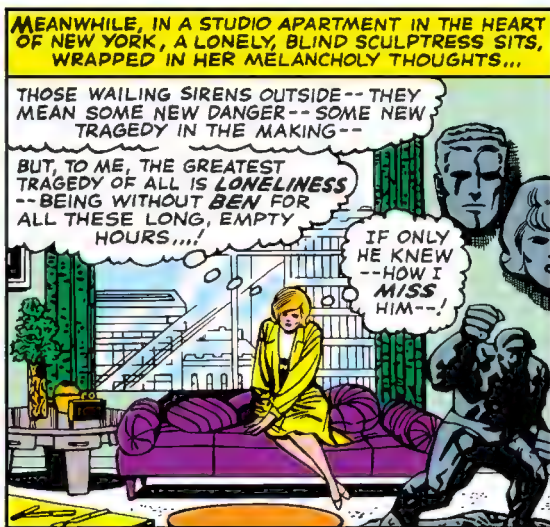
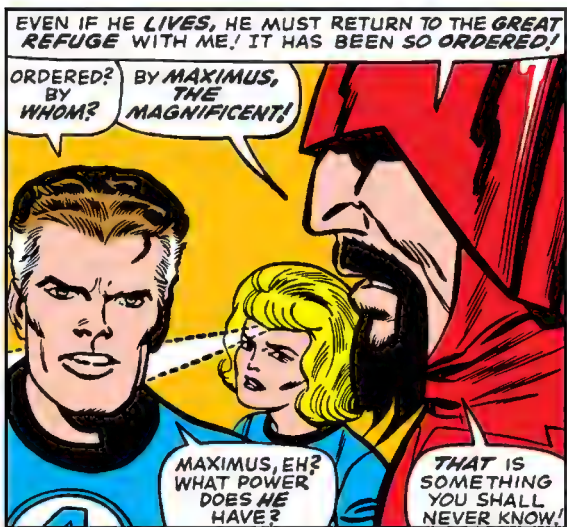
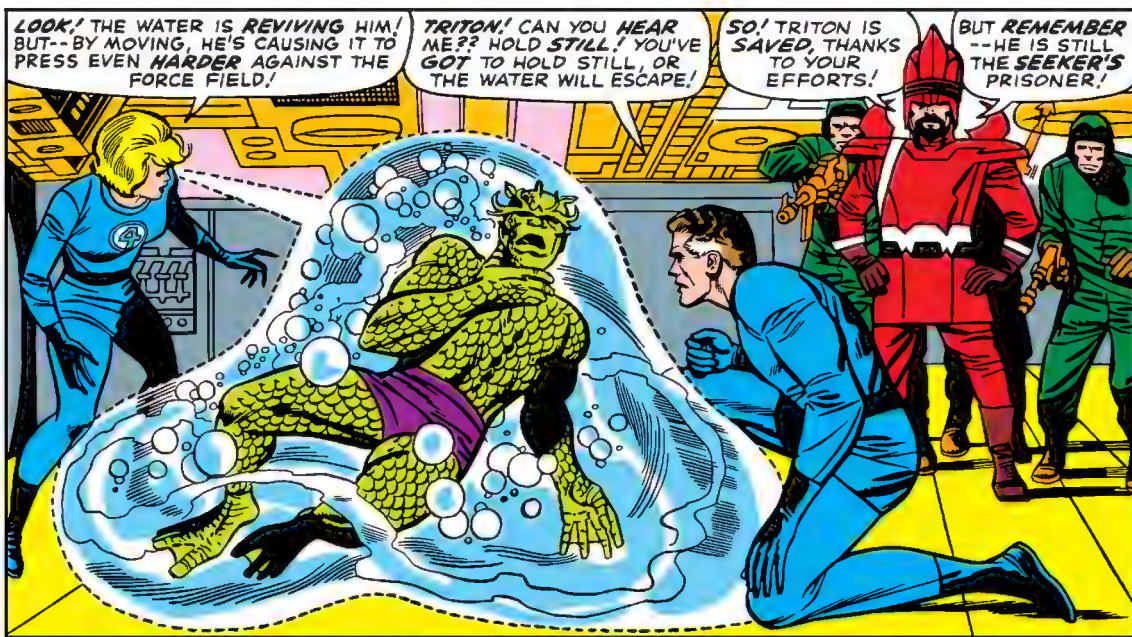
WAIT! WE CAN'T
LEAVE TRITON LIKE
THIS! WITHOUT THE
WATER HE NEEDS
TO BREATHE--HE'S
SUFFOCATING!

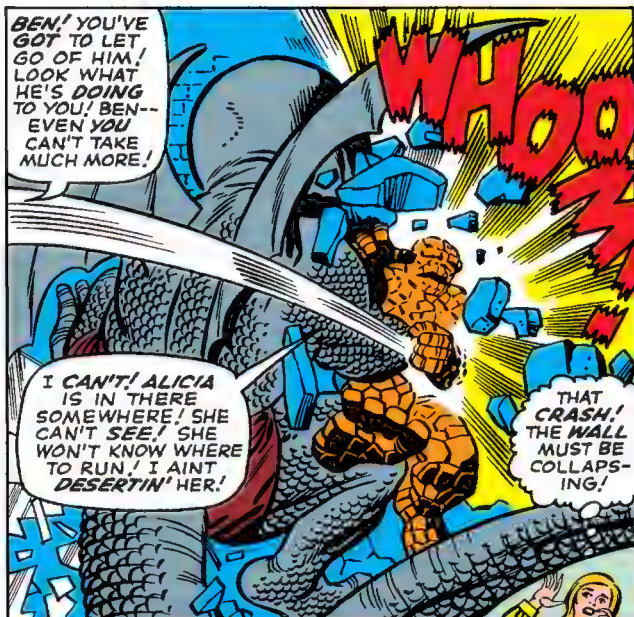
GO!-- YOU
MUST GRANT
ME-- THE
PRIVILEGE
OF DYING--
WITH
DIGNITY--!

ATTENTION: PULITZER
PRIZE COMMITTEE--

STORY: STAN LEE ART: JACK KIRBY INKING: JOE SINNOTT LETTERING: ART SIMEK



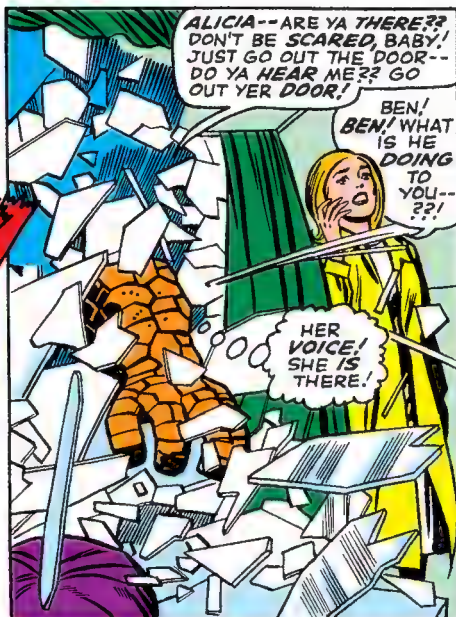




BEN! YOU'VE GOT TO LET GO OF HIM! LOOK WHAT HE'S DOING TO YOU! BEN-- EVEN YOU CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE!

I CAN'T! ALICIA IS IN THERE SOMEWHERE! SHE CAN'T SEE! SHE WON'T KNOW WHERE TO RUN! I AINT DESERTIN' HER!

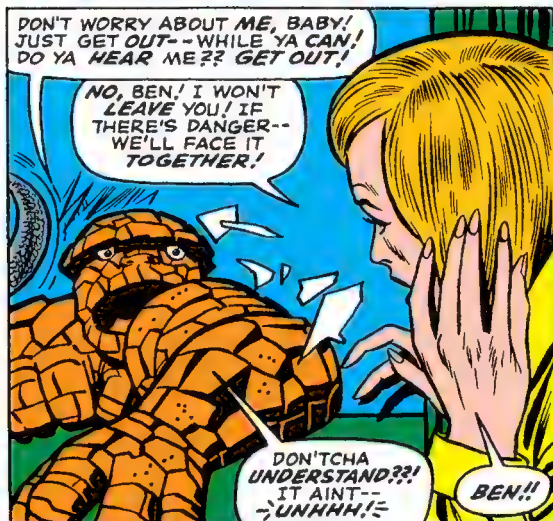
THAT CRASH! THE WALL MUST BE COLLAPSING!



ALICIA-- ARE YA THERE?? DON'T BE SCARED, BABY! JUST GO OUT THE DOOR-- DO YA HEAR ME?? GO OUT YER DOOR!

BEN! WHAT IS HE DOING TO YOU--??!

HER VOICE! SHE IS THERE!

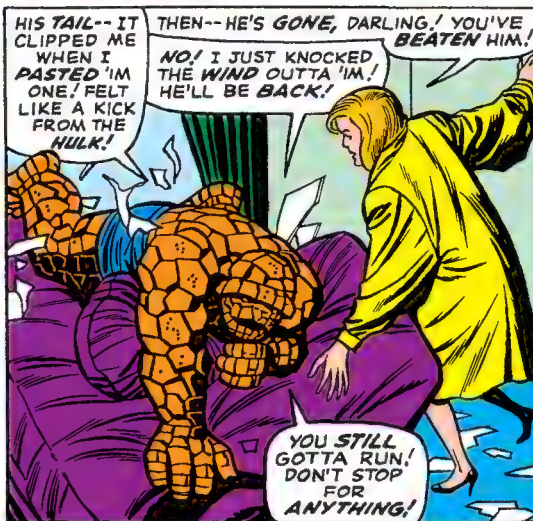


DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, BABY! JUST GET OUT-- WHILE YA CAN! DO YA HEAR ME?? GET OUT!

NO, BEN! I WON'T LEAVE YOU! IF THERE'S DANGER-- WE'LL FACE IT TOGETHER!

DON'TCHA UNDERSTAND??! IT AINT-- UNHHH!!

BEN!!



HIS TAIL-- IT CLIPPED ME WHEN I PASTED 'IM ONE! FELT LIKE A KICK FROM THE HULK!

THEN-- HE'S GONE, DARLING! YOU'VE BEATEN HIM!

NO! I JUST KNOCKED THE WIND OUTTA 'IM! HE'LL BE BACK!

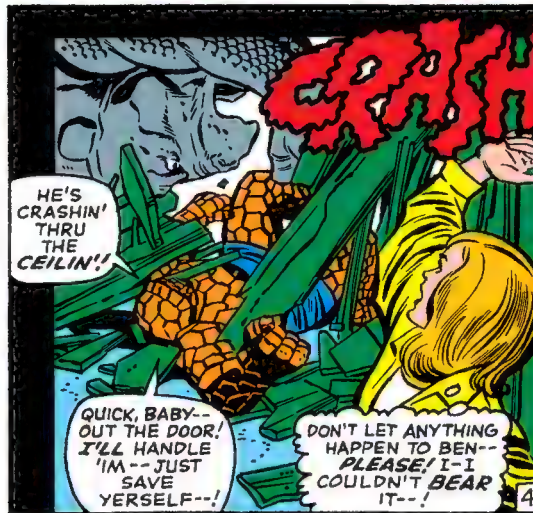
YOU STILL GOTTA RUN! DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING!



AND LEAVE YOU, BEN? WHAT GOOD IS MY OWN SAFETY-- MY OWN LIFE-- IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU??

DON'TCHA SEE-- THAT'S HOW I FEEL-- ABOUT YOU! YOU GOTTA SAVE YERSELF-- FOR ME, BABY--!

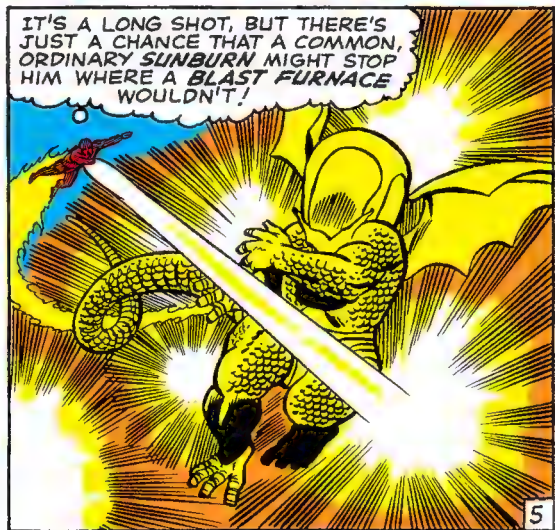
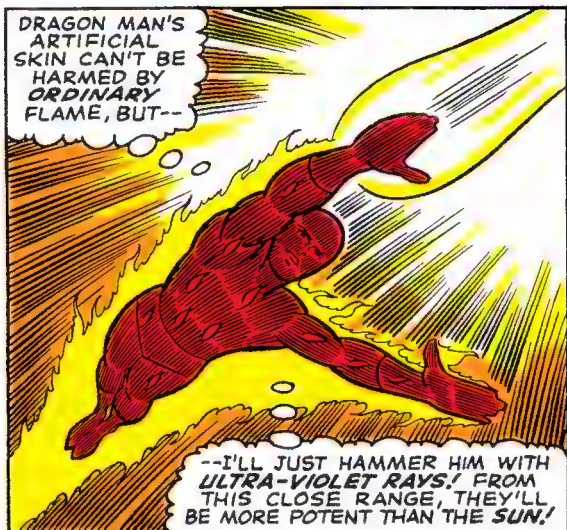
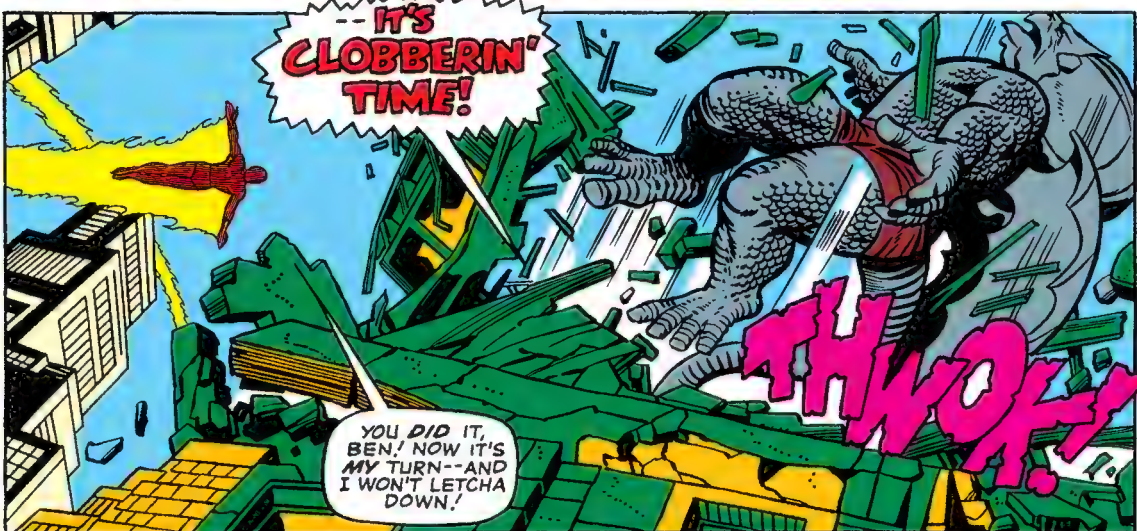
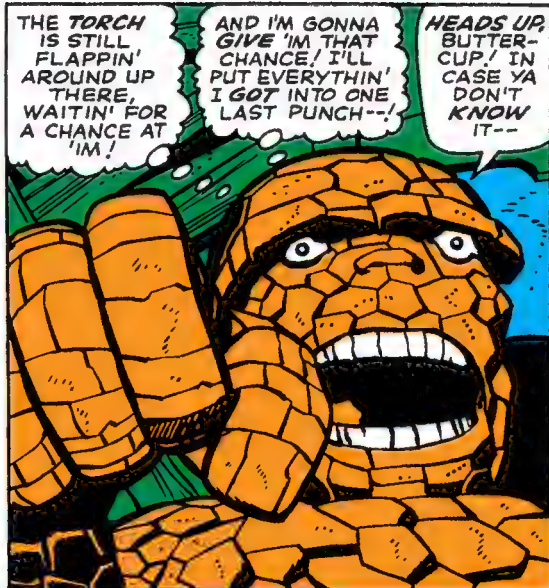
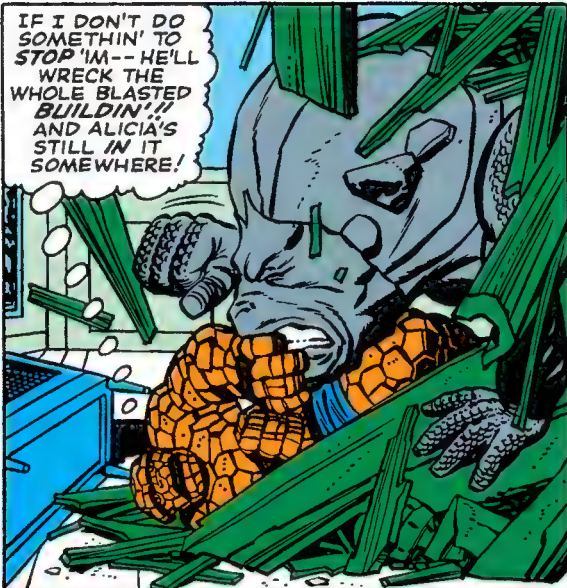
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS-- I LOVE YA-- DON'T EVER FORGET IT--!

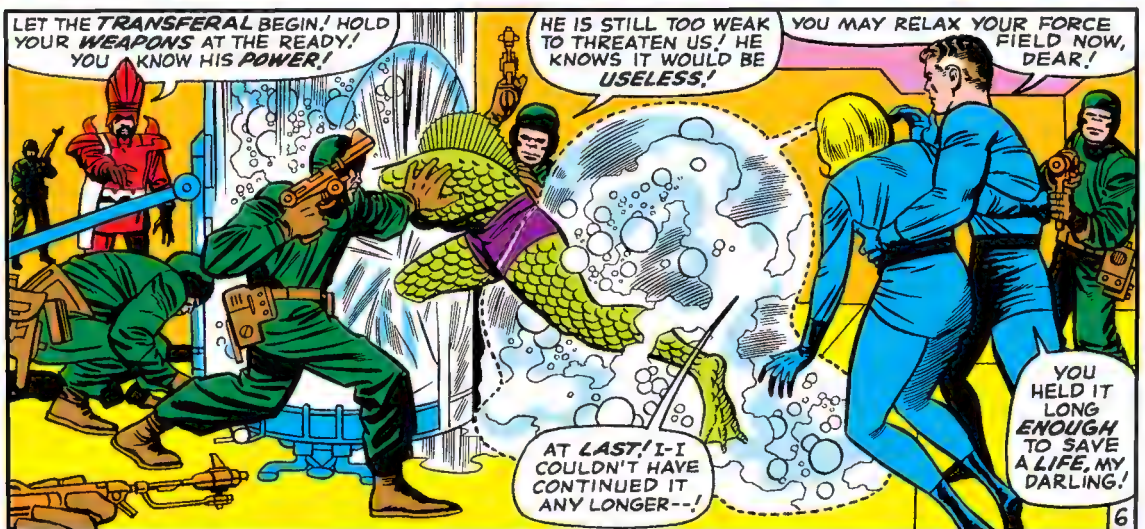
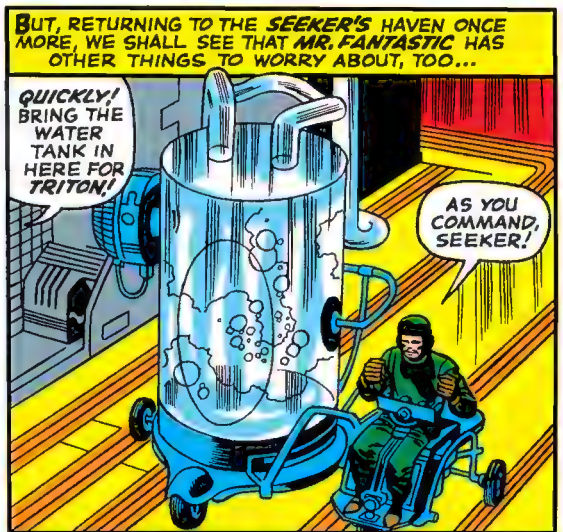
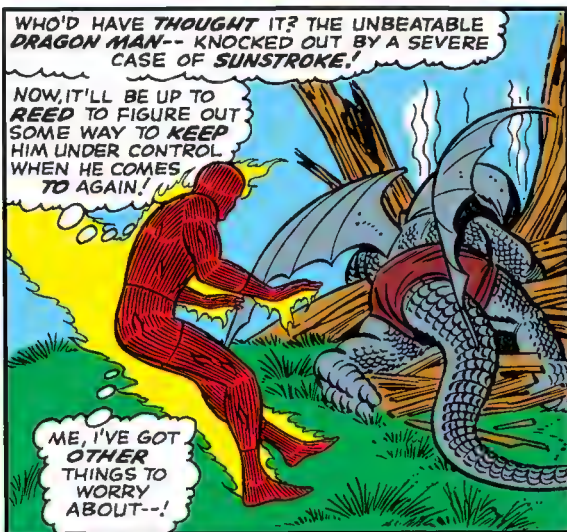
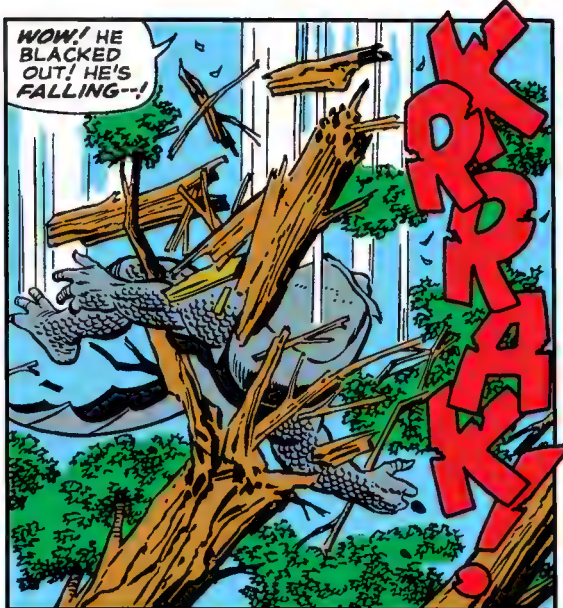
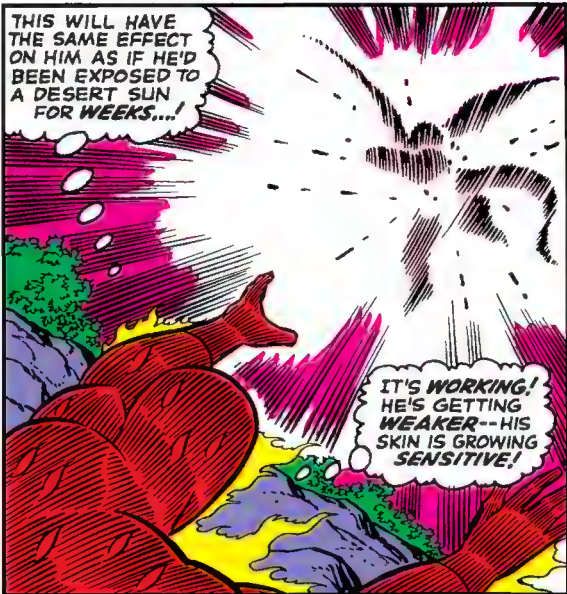


HE'S CRASHIN' THRU THE CEILIN'!

QUICK, BABY-- OUT THE DOOR! I'LL HANDLE 'IM-- JUST SAVE YERSELF--!

DON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO BEN-- PLEASE! I-I COULDN'T BEAR IT--!

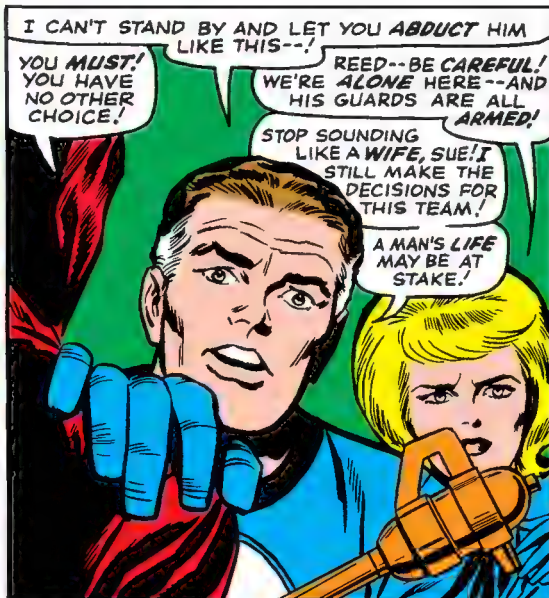






YOU MERELY
SAVED HIM FOR
ME! NOW, HE
SHALL BE
RETURNED TO
THE GREAT
REFUGE! STAND
ASIDE, INTER-
LOPER!

HOLD IT! LOOK
AT HIM! HE DOESN'T
WANT TO GO! HE'S
STRUGGLING IN
THAT TANK!



I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET YOU ABDUCT HIM
LIKE THIS--!

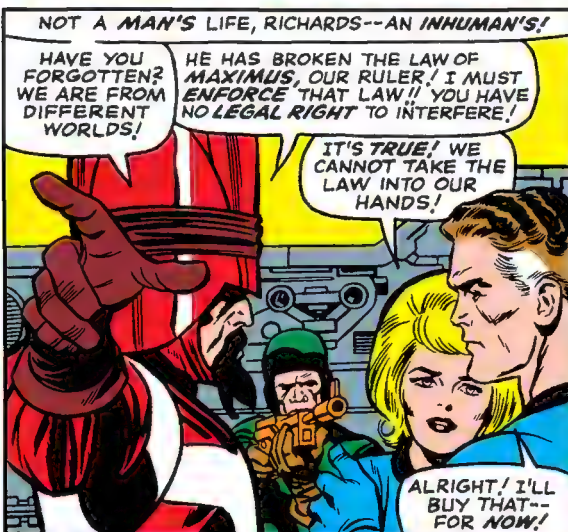
YOU MUST!
YOU HAVE
NO OTHER
CHOICE!

LIKE THIS--!

REED--BE CAREFUL!
WE'RE ALONE HERE--AND
HIS GUARDS ARE ALL
ARMED!

STOP SOUNDING
LIKE A WIFE, SUE! I
STILL MAKE THE
DECISIONS FOR
THIS TEAM!

A MAN'S LIFE
MAY BE AT
STAKE!



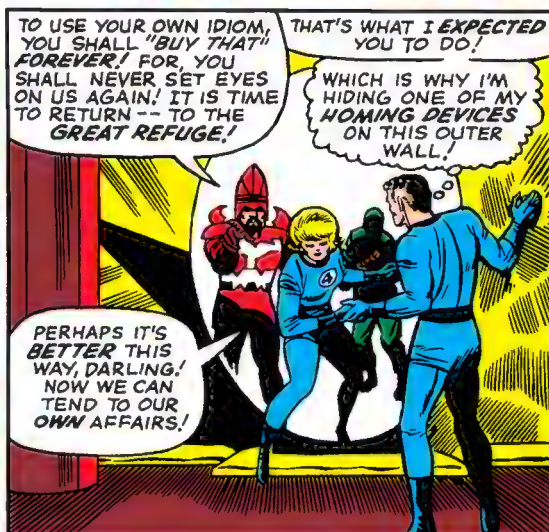
NOT A MAN'S LIFE, RICHARDS--AN INHUMAN'S!

HAVE YOU
FORGOTTEN?
WE ARE FROM
DIFFERENT
WORLDS!

HE HAS BROKEN THE LAW OF
MAXIMUS, OUR RULER! I MUST
ENFORCE THAT LAW!! YOU HAVE
NO LEGAL RIGHT TO INTERFERE!

IT'S TRUE! WE
CANNOT TAKE THE
LAW INTO OUR
HANDS!

ALRIGHT, I'LL
BUY THAT--
FOR NOW!

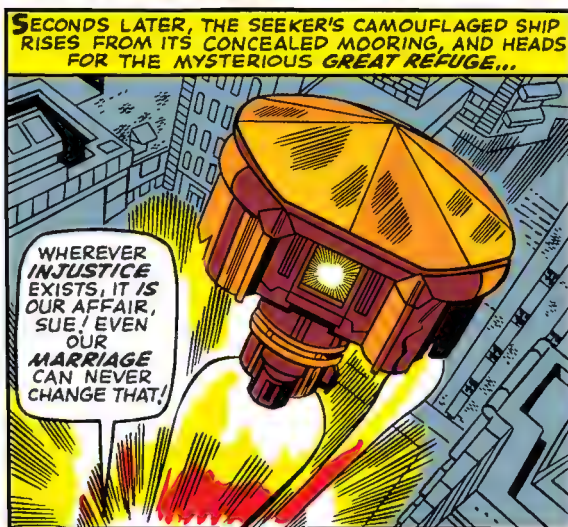


TO USE YOUR OWN IDIOM,
YOU SHALL "BUY THAT"
FOREVER! FOR, YOU
SHALL NEVER SET EYES
ON US AGAIN! IT IS TIME
TO RETURN -- TO THE
GREAT REFUGE!

THAT'S WHAT I EXPECTED
YOU TO DO!

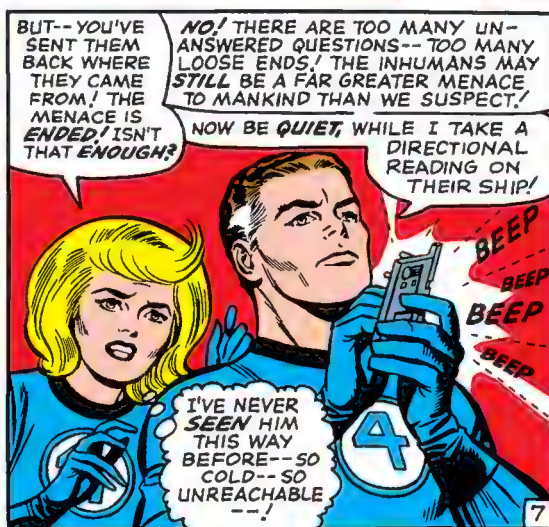
WHICH IS WHY I'M
HIDING ONE OF MY
HOMING DEVICES
ON THIS OUTER
WALL!

PERHAPS IT'S
BETTER THIS
WAY, DARLING!
NOW WE CAN
TEND TO OUR
OWN AFFAIRS!



SECONDS LATER, THE SEEKER'S CAMOUFLAGED SHIP
RISES FROM ITS CONCEALED MOORING, AND HEADS
FOR THE MYSTERIOUS GREAT REFUGE...

WHEREVER
INJUSTICE
EXISTS, IT IS
OUR AFFAIR,
SUE! EVEN
OUR
MARRIAGE
CAN NEVER
CHANGE THAT!



BUT--YOU'VE
SENT THEM
BACK WHERE
THEY CAME
FROM! THE
MENACE IS
ENDED! ISN'T
THAT ENOUGH?

NO! THERE ARE TOO MANY UN-
ANSWERED QUESTIONS--TOO MANY
LOOSE ENDS! THE INHUMANS MAY
STILL BE A FAR GREATER MENACE
TO MANKIND THAN WE SUSPECT!

NOW BE QUIET, WHILE I TAKE A
DIRECTIONAL
READING ON
THEIR SHIP!

I'VE NEVER
SEEN HIM
THIS WAY
BEFORE--SO
COLD--SO
UNREACHABLE
--!

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

BUT, WHAT OF **BLACK BOLT** AND HIS "FAMILY" OF INHUMANS?? LAST ISSUE WE SAW THEM VANISH BEFORE OUR EYES, BY MEANS OF A SHIMMERING **DIMENSION DISPLACER**! AND NOW-- THEY REAPPEAR -- BUT **WHERE???**

WE'RE SAFE AT LAST! IN THE GREAT REFUGE-- WHERE WE BELONG!

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US WHEN WE MUST FACE THE WRATH OF **MAXIMUS**??

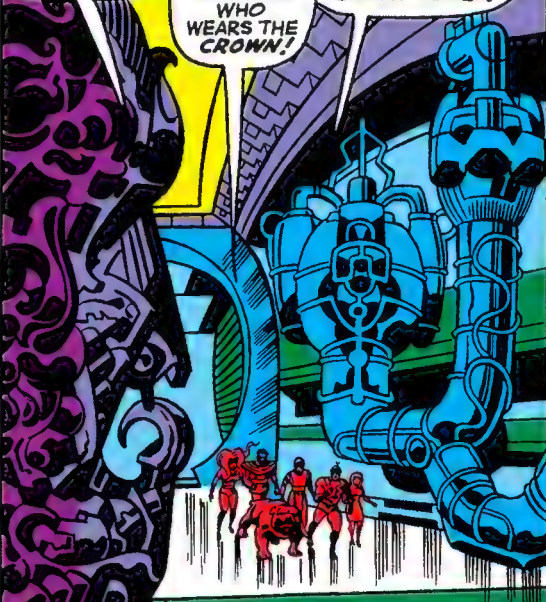
I'LL NEVER BE CONTENT TO REMAIN HERE AGAIN --NOT WHILE **JOHNNY STORM** DWELLS AMONG THE HUMANS!



WE NEED NOT FEAR **MAXIMUS**! **BLACK BOLT** IS HERE TO PROTECT US!

DO NOT BE SO CERTAIN, **MEDUSA**, REMEMBER, IT IS **MAXIMUS** WHO WEARS THE CROWN!

BUT IT IS NOT RIGHTFULLY HIS! WE ALL KNOW IT WAS MEANT TO BE WORN BY **BLACK BOLT**!

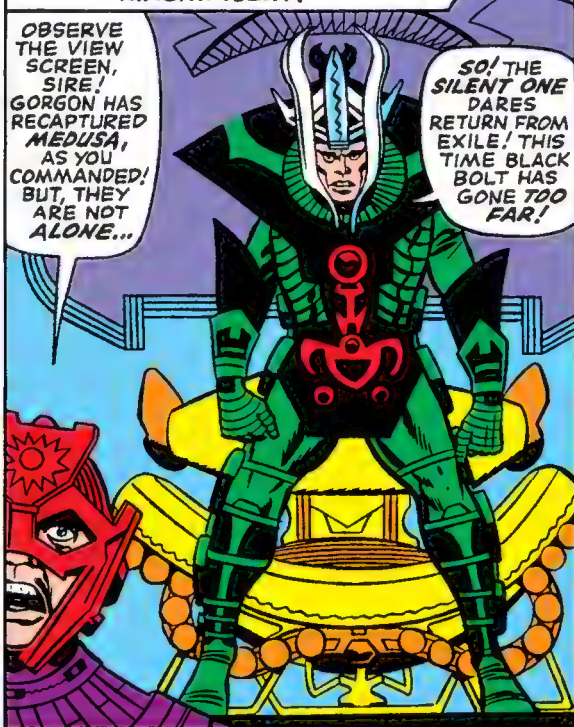


BUT, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, AS THE TENSE INHUMANS SLOWLY TRAVERSE THE GREAT HALL, OTHER EYES ARE UPON THEM--

--THE HOSTILE EYES OF **MAXIMUS**, THE MAGNIFICENT!

OBSERVE THE VIEW SCREEN, SIRE! **GORGON** HAS RECAPTURED **MEDUSA**, AS YOU COMMANDED! BUT, THEY ARE NOT ALONE...

SO! THE SILENT ONE DARES RETURN FROM EXILE! THIS TIME **BLACK BOLT** HAS GONE TOO FAR!



WE MUST HIDE THE NEW WEAPON FROM HIS SIGHT!-- THE ONE WITH WHICH WE SHALL CONQUER THE HUMANS!

TRUE! DISPATCH THE SAVAGE **ALPHA PRIMITIVES** TO DELAY THEM, WHILE WE DO WHAT MUST BE DONE!

BUT, SIRE-- THEY FIGHT UNTO THE DEATH! AND **BLACK BOLT** IS STILL-- YOUR OWN BROTHER!



SILENCE! NEVER REMIND ME OF THAT UGLY FACT AGAIN, IF YOU WISH TO LIVE!

THUS, AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON, THE ALPHA PRIMITIVES ARE UNLEASHED -- A FEROCIOUS, SENSELESS HORDE OF RAMPAGING INHUMANS -- UNDER THE CONTROL OF NONE SAVE MAXIMUS...

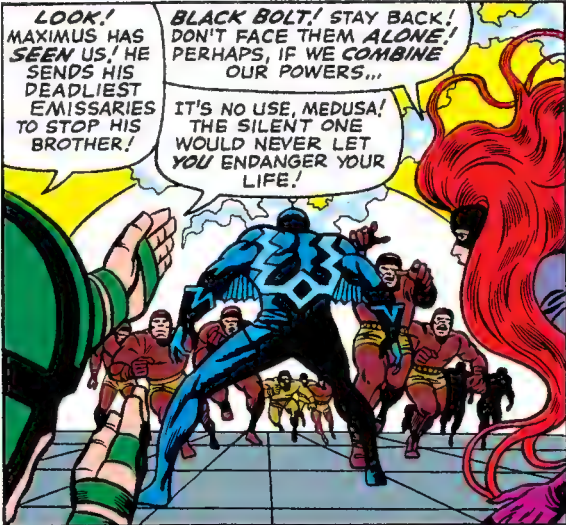
NOW! BEFORE BLACK BOLT CAN DREAM UP A PLAN OF ESCAPE...!



LOOK! MAXIMUS HAS SEEN US, HE SENDS HIS DEADLIEST EMISSARIES TO STOP HIS BROTHER!

BLACK BOLT! STAY BACK! DON'T FACE THEM ALONE! PERHAPS, IF WE COMBINE OUR POWERS...

IT'S NO USE, MEDUSA! THE SILENT ONE WOULD NEVER LET YOU ENDANGER YOUR LIFE!



BUT WHY? HE KNOWS I AM BETROTHED TO MAXIMUS!!

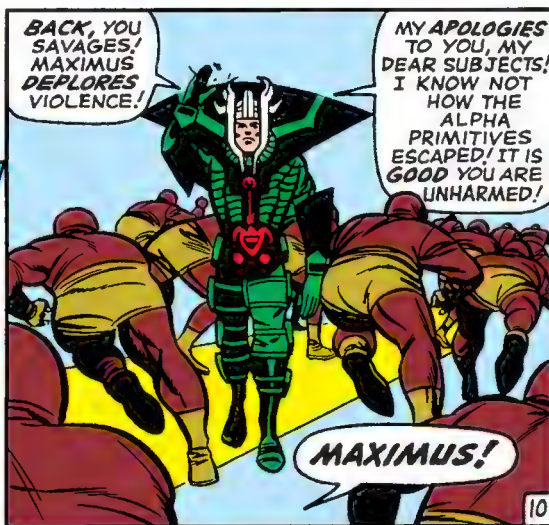
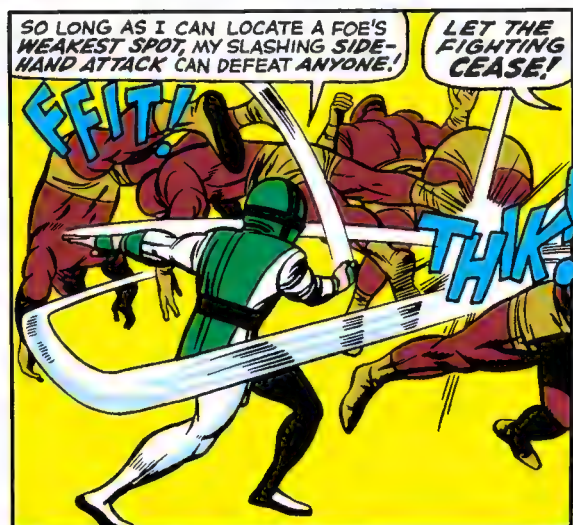
PERHAPS, MEDUSA -- BUT, IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS, YOU KNOW 'TIS BLACK BOLT YOU LOVE -- JUST AS HE LOVES YOU!

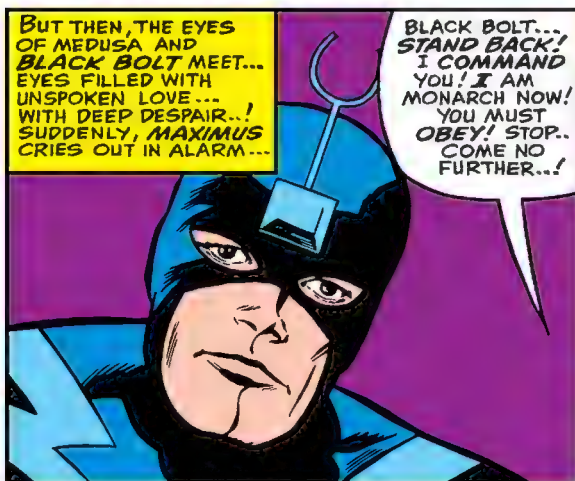
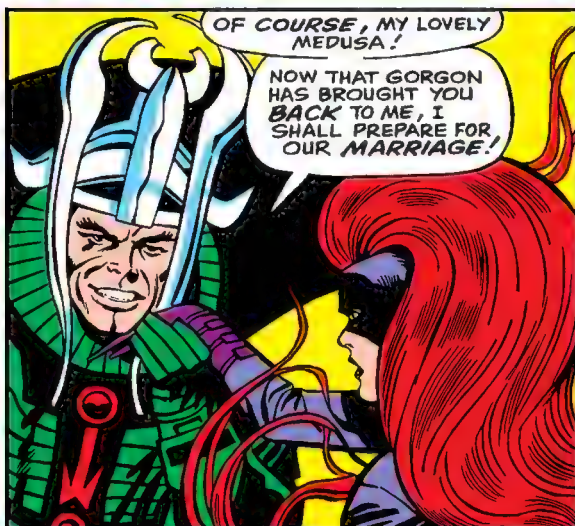
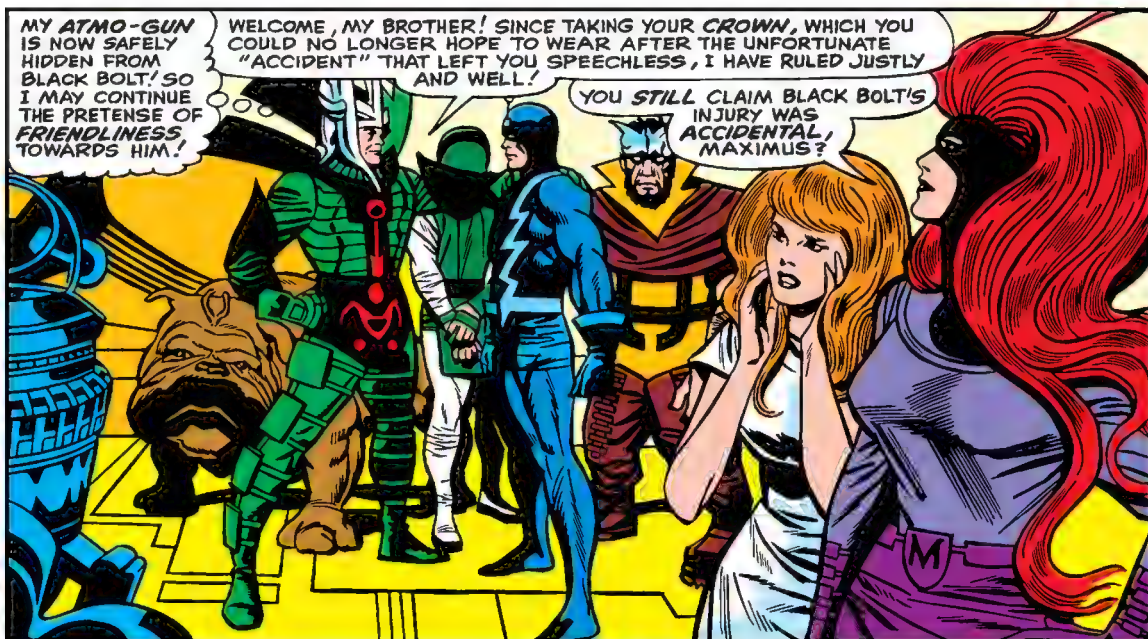


SEE! HE BEGINS HIS GLIDING POWER ATTACK!

IT'S HOPELESS AGAINST SO MANY -- BUT WHAT A GLORIOUS HOPELESSNESS!







THEN SLOWLY, THE GRIM
REALIZATION DAWNS...

THE GUARDS ARE GONE!
KARNAK AND GORGON
GUARD THE DOOR! I
STAND ALONE!



I DARE NOT CHALLENGE MY
BROTHER TO BATTLE! THOUGH
OUR POWERS ARE EQUAL, MY
CUNNING IS NO MATCH FOR
HIS AWESOME COURAGE!

INSTEAD, I SHALL BIDE MY
TIME! SO LONG AS I
POSSESS THE ATMO-GUN,
THE FINAL TRIUMPH MUST
BE MINE!



THERE WAS NO
NEED FOR SUCH
THEATRICALS, MY
BELOVED
BROTHER! I
WAS MERELY
GUARDING THE
CROWN IN YOUR
ABSENCE!

MAXIMUS HAS
NEVER DESIRED
POWER! MY ONLY
WISH IS TO
SERVE YOU...
IN MY OWN
MANNER!

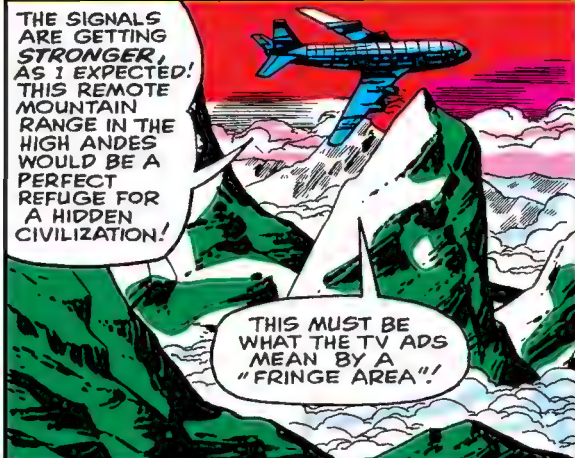


IF BLACK BOLT HEARS
THE FAWNING WORDS OF
HIS BROTHER, HE GIVES
NO SIGN. INSTEAD,
WITH THE AIR OF ONE
WHO WAS BORN TO
RULE, HE PLACES THE
ROYAL CROWN UPON
HIS HEAD... STILL
SILENT, STILL EX-
PRESSIONLESS... STILL
THE MOST MAJESTIC
INHUMAN OF ALL!



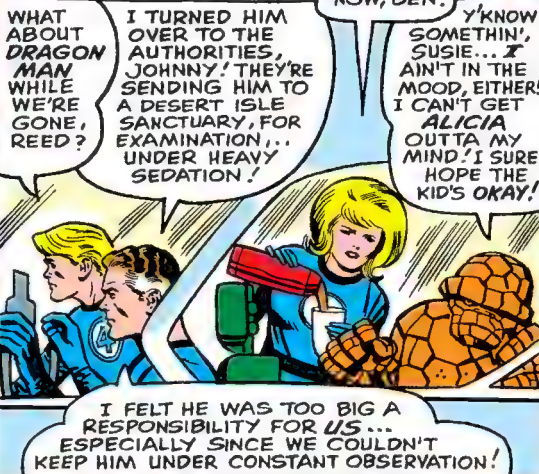
BEHOLD!
BLACK BOLT
IS KING ONCE
AGAIN! KING BY
RIGHT OF EMINENT
DOMAIN! BY RIGHT
OF ROYAL
CHALLENGE! BY
RIGHT OF FAIT
ACCOMPLI! MAXI-
MUS IS DETHRONED!
LONG LIVE THE
KING!

MEANWHILE, FLYING IN A CONVENTIONAL JET LINER, IN ORDER TO AVOID ATTRACTING UNDUE ATTENTION, THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-TEAM HOMES IN ON THE SIGNAL DEVICE WHICH REED RICHARDS HAD CONCEALED ON THE SEEKER'S CRAFT...



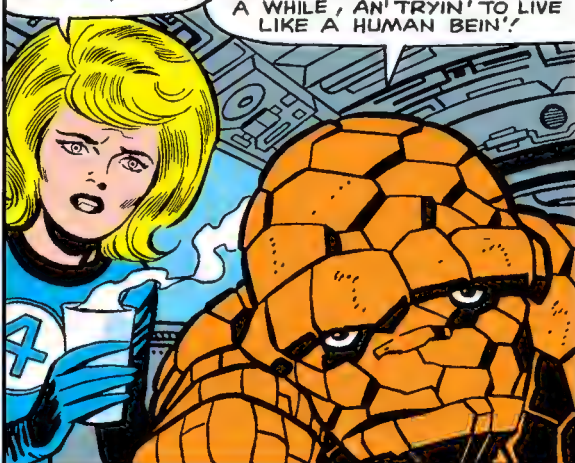
SHEESH! THAT SURE WENT OVER LIKE A LEAD BALLOON!

I GUESS *NONE* OF US ARE IN THE MOOD FOR LIGHT-HEARTED BANTER RIGHT NOW, BEN!

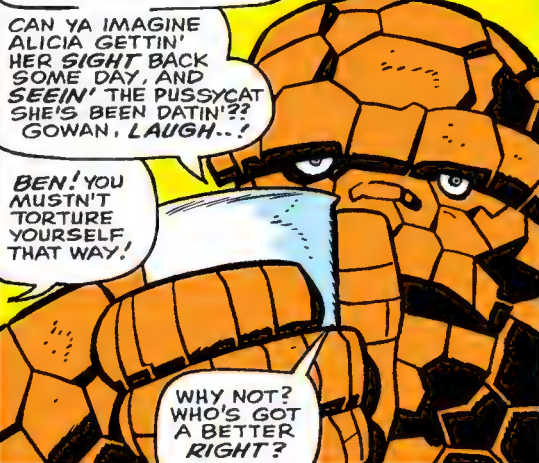


PERHAPS SOME HOT CHOCOLATE WILL LIFT YOUR SPIRITS, BEN?

NOT A CHANCE, LADY! THE ONLY THING THAT'LL DO ME ANY GOOD IS **CUTTIN' OUT** OF THIS NUTTY COMBO FOR A WHILE, AN'TRYIN' TO LIVE LIKE A HUMAN BEIN'!



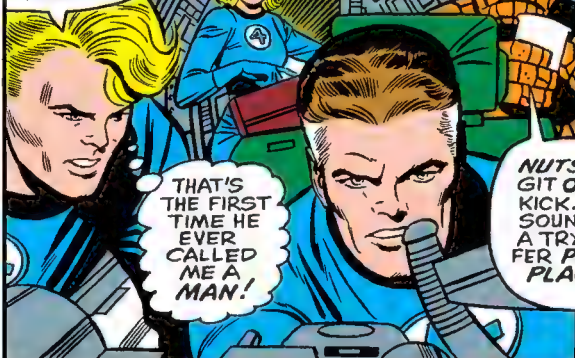
HOW COME YA AIN'T **LAUGHIN'** SUE? IT'S PRETTY **FUNNY**, AIN'T IT? THE IDEA OF *ME*... THE *THING*... BEIN' IN LOVE... WANTIN' TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE!



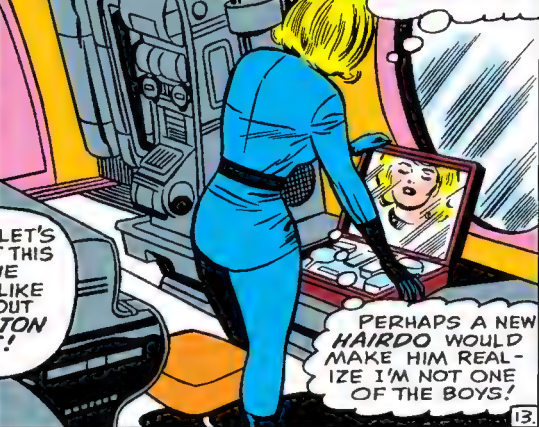
C'MON, BENJY... KNOCK IT OFF! WE ALL GOT PROBLEMS! FOR ALL I KNOW, I'LL NEVER SEE **CRYSTAL** AGAIN!

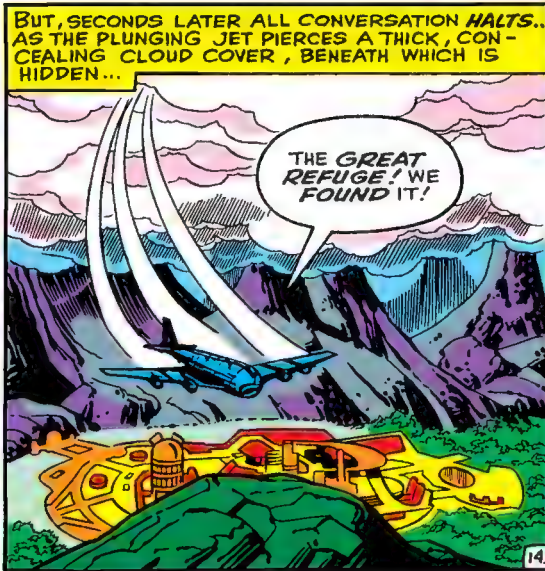
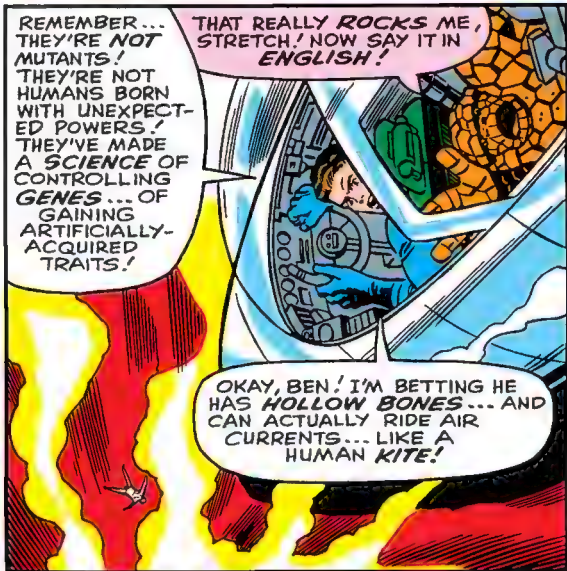
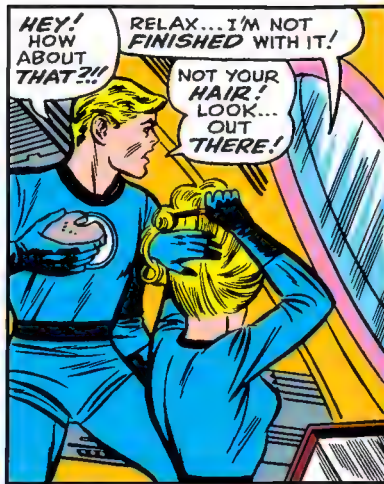
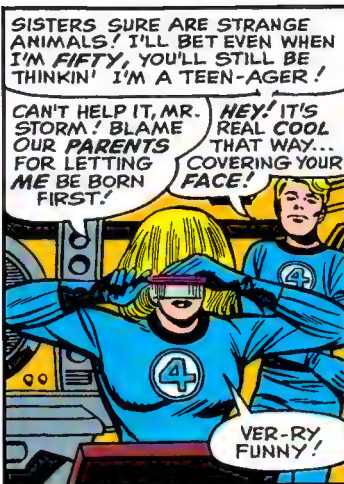
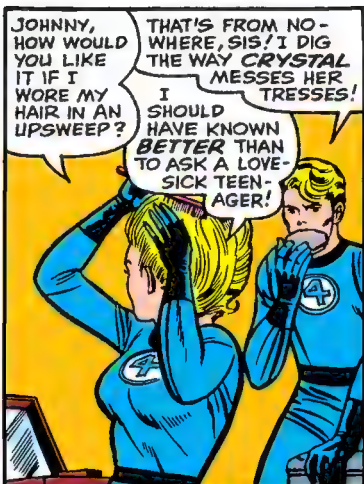
JOHNNY STORM! YOU'VE BARELY MET HER! YOU HARDLY KNOW HER!

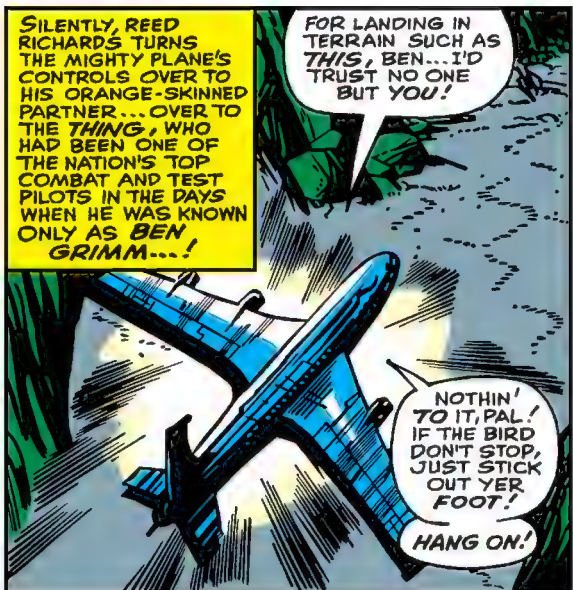
SUE, WHEN A MAN THINKS HE'S IN LOVE, *NOBODY* CAN TELL HIM HE'S NOT!



WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S **HAPPENED** LATELY, REED HAS HARDLY BEEN ACTING LIKE A **HONEYMOONER** TOWARDS ME!







SILENTLY, REED RICHARDS TURNS THE MIGHTY PLANE'S CONTROLS OVER TO HIS ORANGE-SKINNED PARTNER... OVER TO THE **THING**, WHO HAD BEEN ONE OF THE NATION'S TOP COMBAT AND TEST PILOTS IN THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS KNOWN ONLY AS **BEN GRIMM**...!

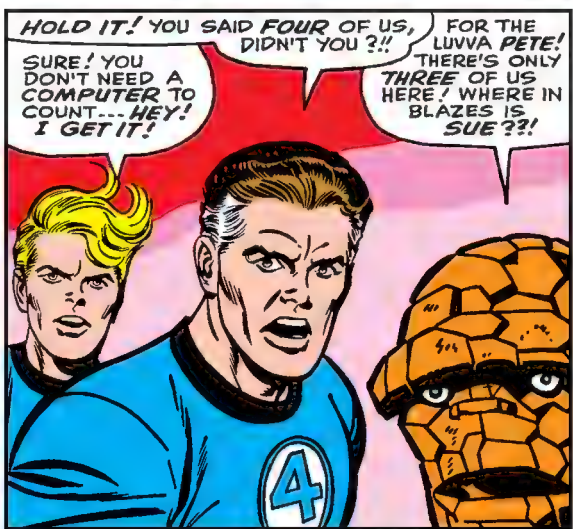
FOR LANDING IN TERRAIN SUCH AS **THIS**, BEN... I'D TRUST NO ONE BUT **YOU**!

NOTHIN' TO IT, PAL! IF THE BIRD DON'T STOP, JUST STICK OUT YER FOOT!
HANG ON!



THEN, MINUTES LATER, AFTER A ROUGH, BUMPY, BUT SAFE LANDING...
PRETTY COZY! IT'S **FREEZIN'** IN THE MOUNTAINS, BUT IT'S LIKE A **STEAM BATH** DOWN HERE!

THE INHUMANS MUST HAVE FOUND A WAY TO CONTROL THE TEMPERATURE TO SUIT THEMSELVES! **FOUR** OF US AGAINST A WHOLE SUPER-POWERED CIVILIZATION! BUT **NOTHING** COULD MAKE ME TURN BACK TILL I FIND **CRYSTAL**!



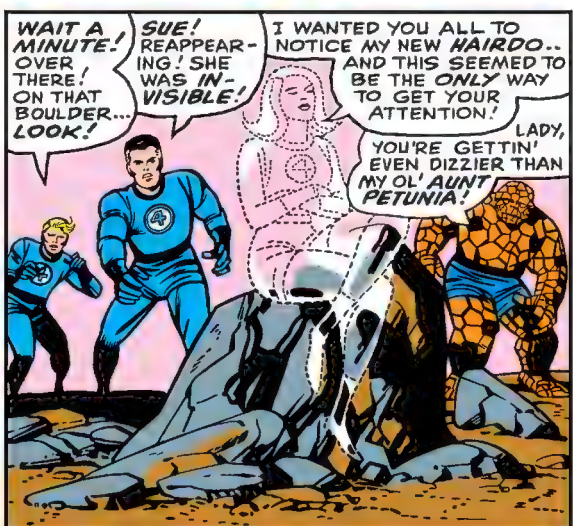
SURE! YOU DON'T NEED A COMPUTER TO COUNT... **HEY!** I GET IT!

FOR THE LUVVA PETE! THERE'S ONLY **THREE** OF US HERE! WHERE IN BLAZES IS **SUE** ??!



SUE! SUE, DARLING! CAN YOU HEAR ME ?? ANSWER ME, **SUE!** **SUUUUUE...**

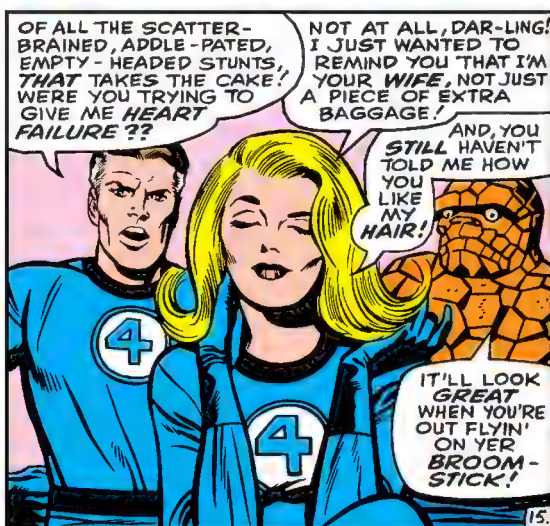
SUSIE, GAL! SAY SOMETHIN'! I DON'T GET IT! SHE WUZ WITH US A MINUTE AGO!



SUE! REAPPEARING! SHE WAS IN **VISIBLE!**

I WANTED YOU ALL TO NOTICE MY NEW **HAIRDO**... AND THIS SEEMED TO BE THE **ONLY** WAY TO GET YOUR ATTENTION!

LADY, YOU'RE GETTIN' EVEN DIZZIER THAN MY OL' AUNT **PETUNIA!**

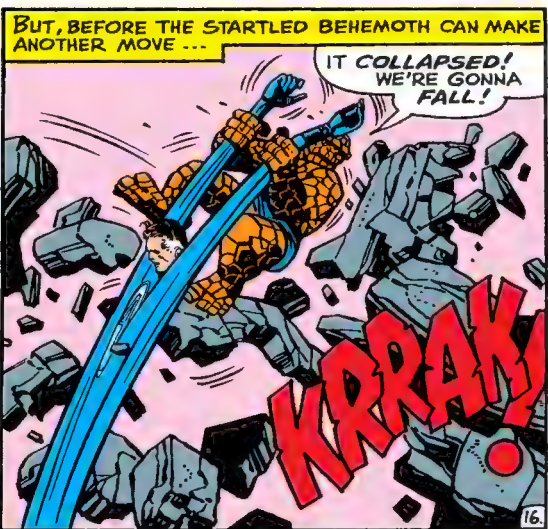
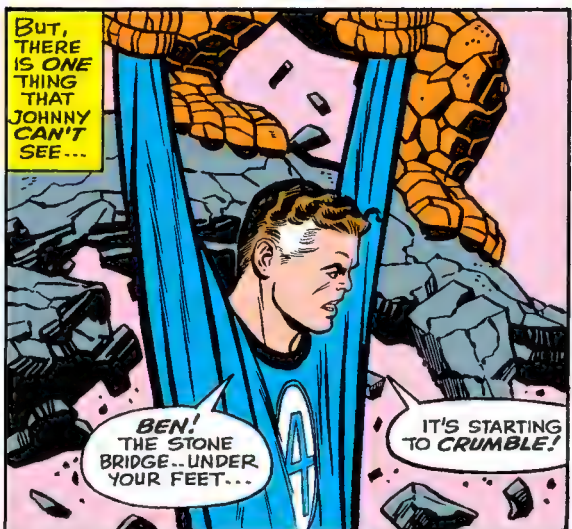
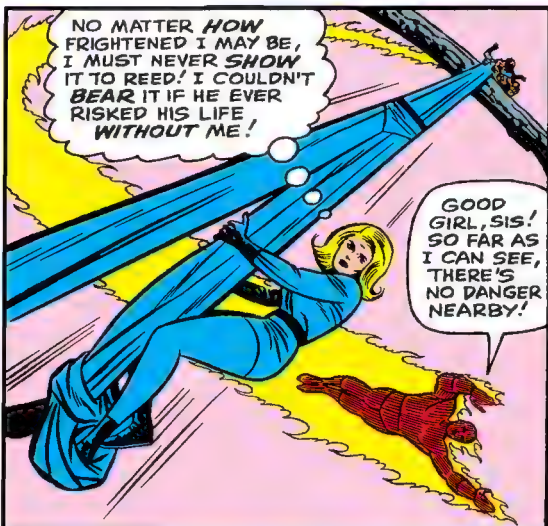
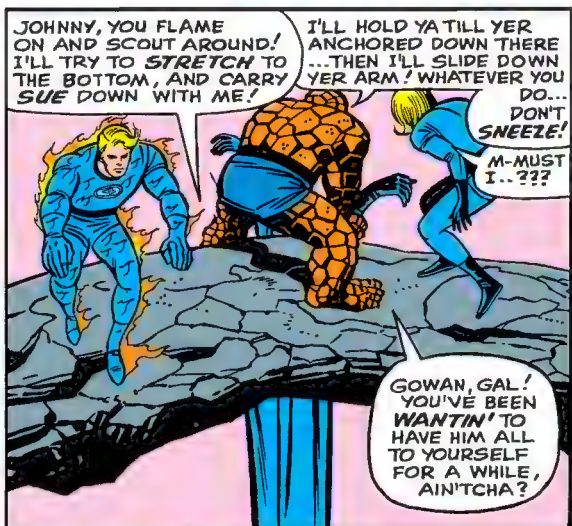
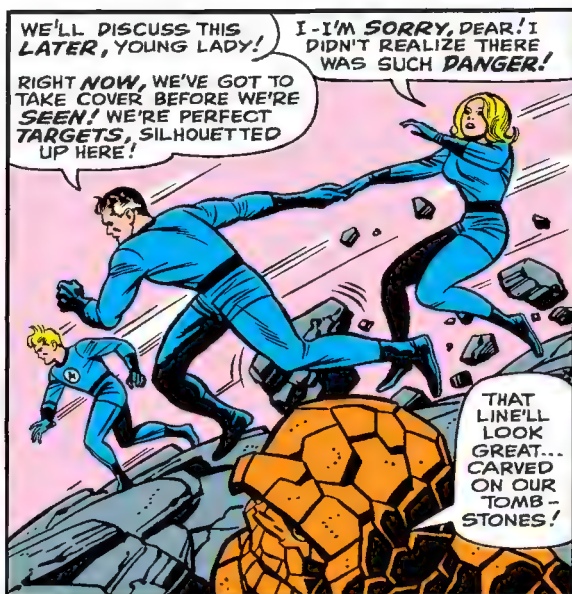


OF ALL THE SCATTER-BRAINED, ADDLE-PATED, EMPTY-HEADED STUNTS, **THAT** TAKES THE CAKE! WERE YOU TRYING TO GIVE ME **HEART FAILURE** ??

NOT AT ALL, DAR-LING! I JUST WANTED TO REMIND YOU THAT I'M YOUR **WIFE**, NOT JUST A PIECE OF EXTRA **BAGGAGE!**

AND, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME HOW YOU LIKE MY **HAIR!**

IT'LL LOOK **GREAT** WHEN YOU'RE OUT FLYIN' ON YER **BROOM-STICK!**



BUT, AGAIN WE MUST TURN BACK TO THE INHUMANS ...ALTHOUGH WE PROMISE TO REJOIN THE F.F. ONCE MORE BEFORE THEY STRIKE THE GROUND!

LET US HAVE NO HARD FEELINGS, DEAR BROTHER! HAVE I NOT MANAGED THE KINGDOM WELL DURING YOUR ABSENCE?

DON'T TRY TO DECEIVE US, MAXIMUS! WE KNOW THAT ALL YOU REALLY WANT IS BLACK BOLT'S CROWN...FOREVER!

WHAT OF TRITON, MAXIMUS?? WE KNOW THE SEEKER BROUGHT HIM TO YOU! IS HE WELL? WHERE IS HE?

YES! WHERE IS TRITON?

TRITON?? I THOUGHT HE WAS WITH YOU? HAS SOMETHING BEFALLEN HIM? IT GRIEVES ME TO HEAR IT!

YOU DO NOT DECEIVE US, MAXIMUS! WE KNOW OF YOUR HATRED FOR THE WATER-BREATHING ONE!

STOP! AWAY WITH THAT BRAZIER! I SUDDENLY REMEMBER!

THEN, TOUCHING A WALL PANEL BUTTON, BLACK BOLT'S COLD-HEARTED BROTHER CAUSES A GIGANTIC TV WALL-SCREEN TO BECOME ILLUMINATED, REVEALING...

TRITON! HE STILL LIVES!

MAXIMUS WOULDN'T DARE HARM HIM... WHILE WE LIVE!

SURELY YOU DON'T THINK I COULD EVER HAVE INTENDED TO HARM ANY OF YOU?? CONSIDER... ARE WE NOT ALL INHUMANS??

YES, BUT ONLY YOU POSSESS A MAD, UNQUENCHABLE AMBITION! ONLY YOU DREAM OF ONE DAY ATTACKING AND CONQUERING THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!

AND WHY NOT?? ARE WE NOT TRULY DESTINED TO RULE??!

YOU'RE MAD, MAXIMUS! WE HAVE OUR OWN LAND... WHERE WE ARE SAFE, AND HAPPY! WHAT MORE CAN WE DESIRE?

POWER!... POWER SUCH AS THE WORLD HAS NEVER KNOWN!

FOR THAT, YOU'D RISK EVERYTHING? YOU'D TOY WITH ALL OUR LIVES?

DO NOT FEAR, CRYSTAL! HE SHALL NEVER SUCCEED SO LONG AS BLACK BOLT WEARS THE CROWN!

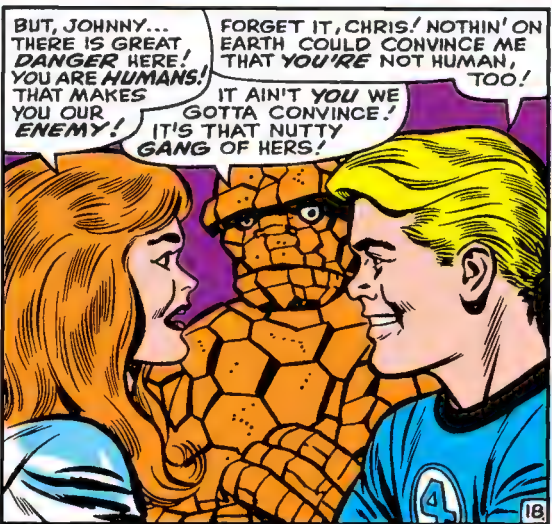
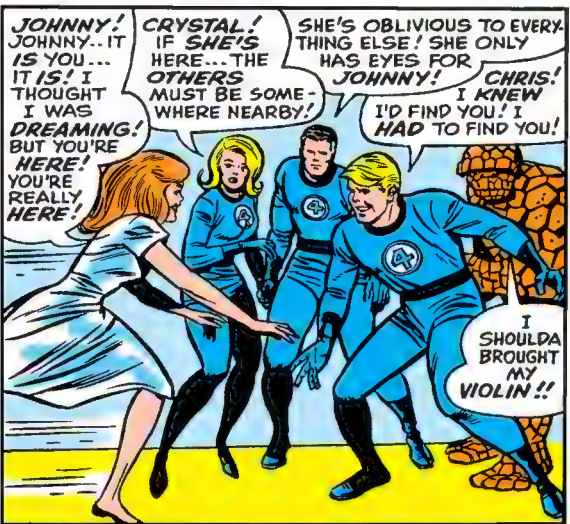
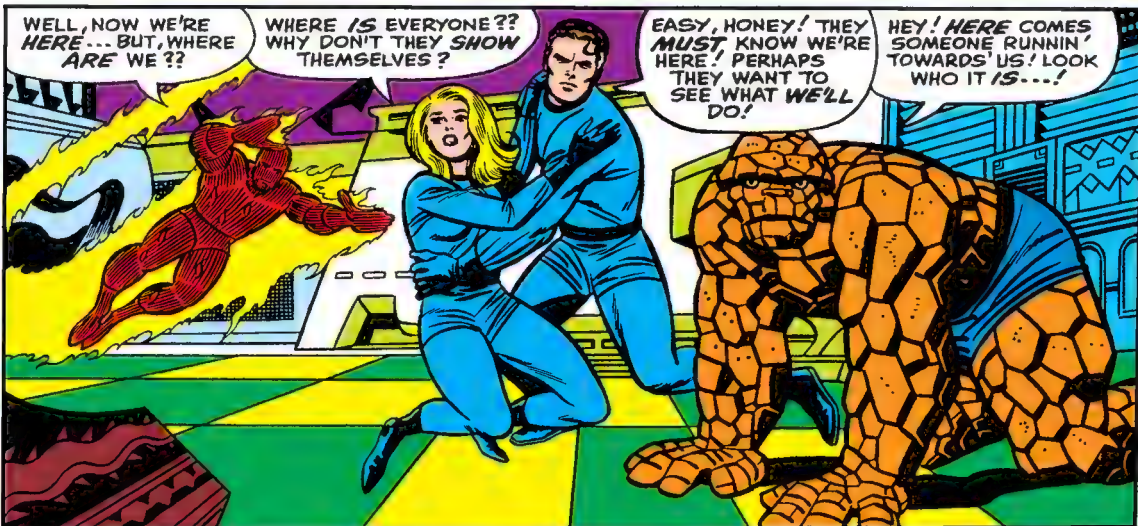
BUT THEN, ANOTHER AMAZING TABLEAU SUDDENLY TAKES PLACE ...

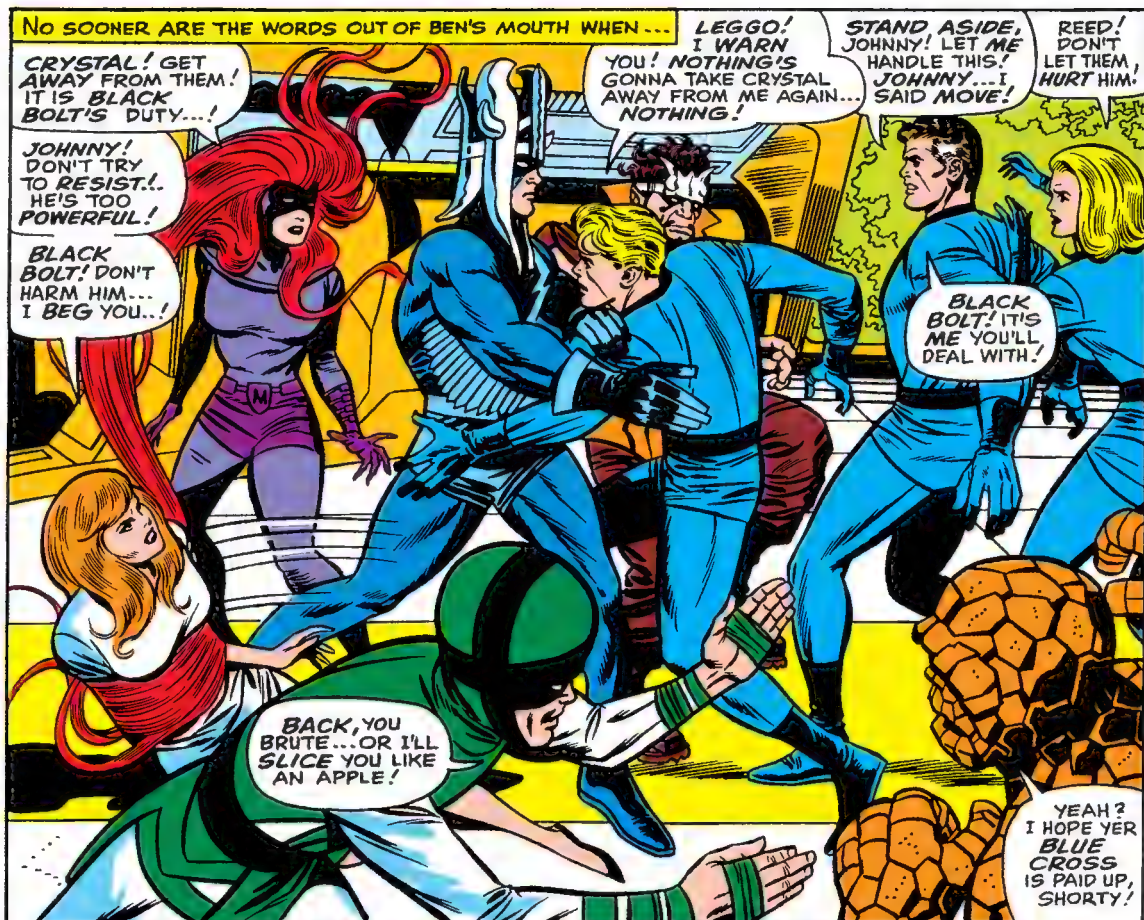
JOHNNY! JOHNNY! HERE I AM... HERE!

LOOK! IT'S THE TORCH! HE'S FOUND US!

QUIET, GIRL! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS? WE'RE SAFE NO LONGER!

THE STONE BRIDGE COLLAPSED! THEY'RE FALLING!!!



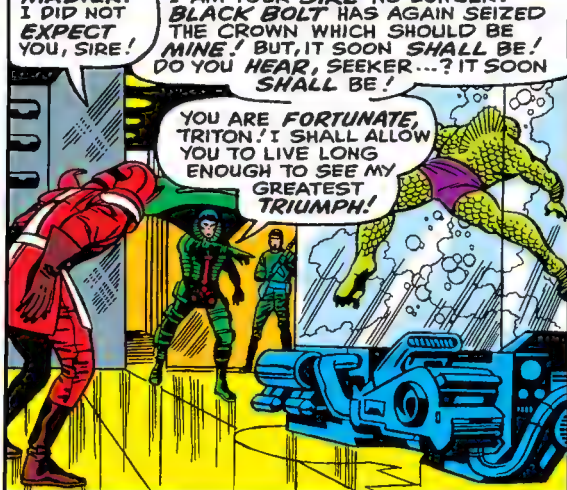


BUT, IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE HIDDEN CITY, MAXIMUS TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE F.F.'S ARRIVAL TO PAY A HURRIED VISIT TO THE SEEKER...!

MASTER! I DID NOT EXPECT YOU, SIRE!

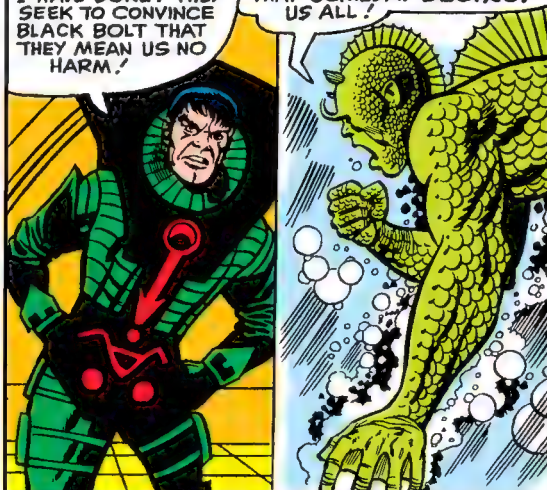
I AM YOUR SIRE NO LONGER! BLACK BOLT HAS AGAIN SEIZED THE CROWN WHICH SHOULD BE MINE! BUT, IT SOON SHALL BE! DO YOU HEAR, SEEKER...? IT SOON SHALL BE!

YOU ARE FORTUNATE, TRITON! I SHALL ALLOW YOU TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE MY GREATEST TRIUMPH!



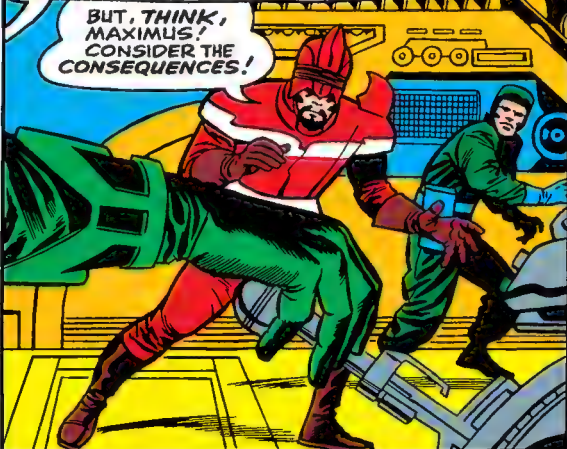
EVEN NOW, THE HUMANS HAVE FOUND US! THEY TRY TO UNDO ALL I HAVE DONE! THEY SEEK TO CONVINCE BLACK BOLT THAT THEY MEAN US NO HARM!

BUT, IT IS TRUE, MAXIMUS! 'TIS YOU WHO ARE OUR ENEMY... 'TIS YOU, WITH YOUR MAD AMBITION, THAT MAY SOMEDAY DESTROY US ALL!



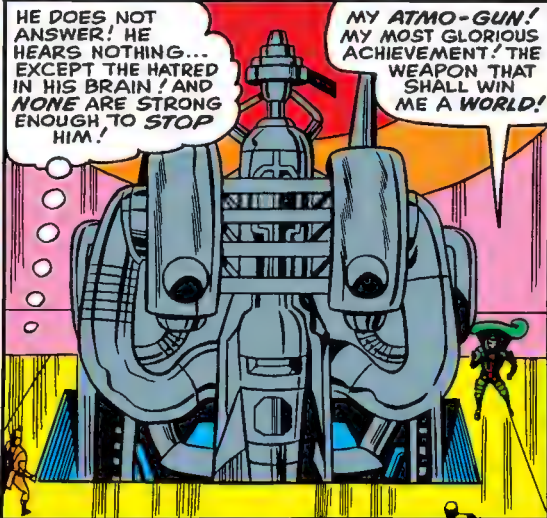
MAD, AM I?? I'LL SHOW YOU HOW MAD I AM! STAND BACK, SEEKER! THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO FIRE THE ATMO-GUN!

BUT, THINK, MAXIMUS! CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES!



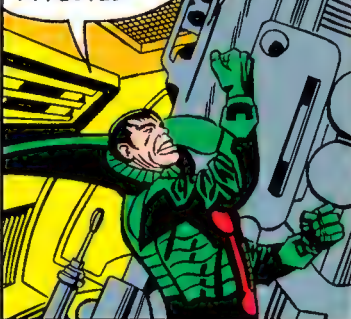
HE DOES NOT ANSWER! HE HEARS NOTHING... EXCEPT THE HATRED IN HIS BRAIN! AND NONE ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO STOP HIM!

MY ATMO-GUN! MY MOST GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT! THE WEAPON THAT SHALL WIN ME A WORLD!

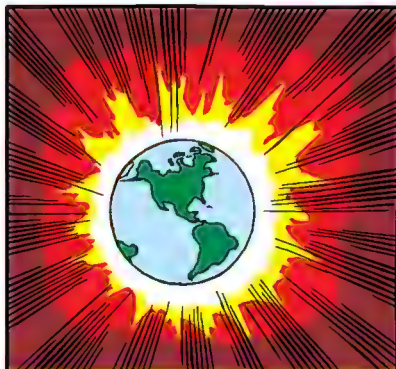


AT THE PRESS OF A BUTTON, IT WILL SET UP VIBRATIONS IN THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE... VIBRATIONS SO DELICATE, SO SENSITIVE, THAT ONLY HUMANS WILL BE AFFECTED!

NOW, WITH ONE STROKE, I DOOM MANKIND!



AND, WHEN IT IS DONE I SHALL RULE THE INHUMANS... AND WE SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!



THUS, THE FATEFUL BUTTON IS PRESSED, AND ONE OF THE MOST STARTLINGLY SPECTACULAR SAGAS OF ALL TIME AWAITS YOU NEXT ISSUE! TO LEARN HOW TRULY MAGNIFICENT A MAGAZINE CAN BE, YOU MUST NOT DARE TO MISS IT! 'NUFF SAID!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

48
MAR

IND.

12¢

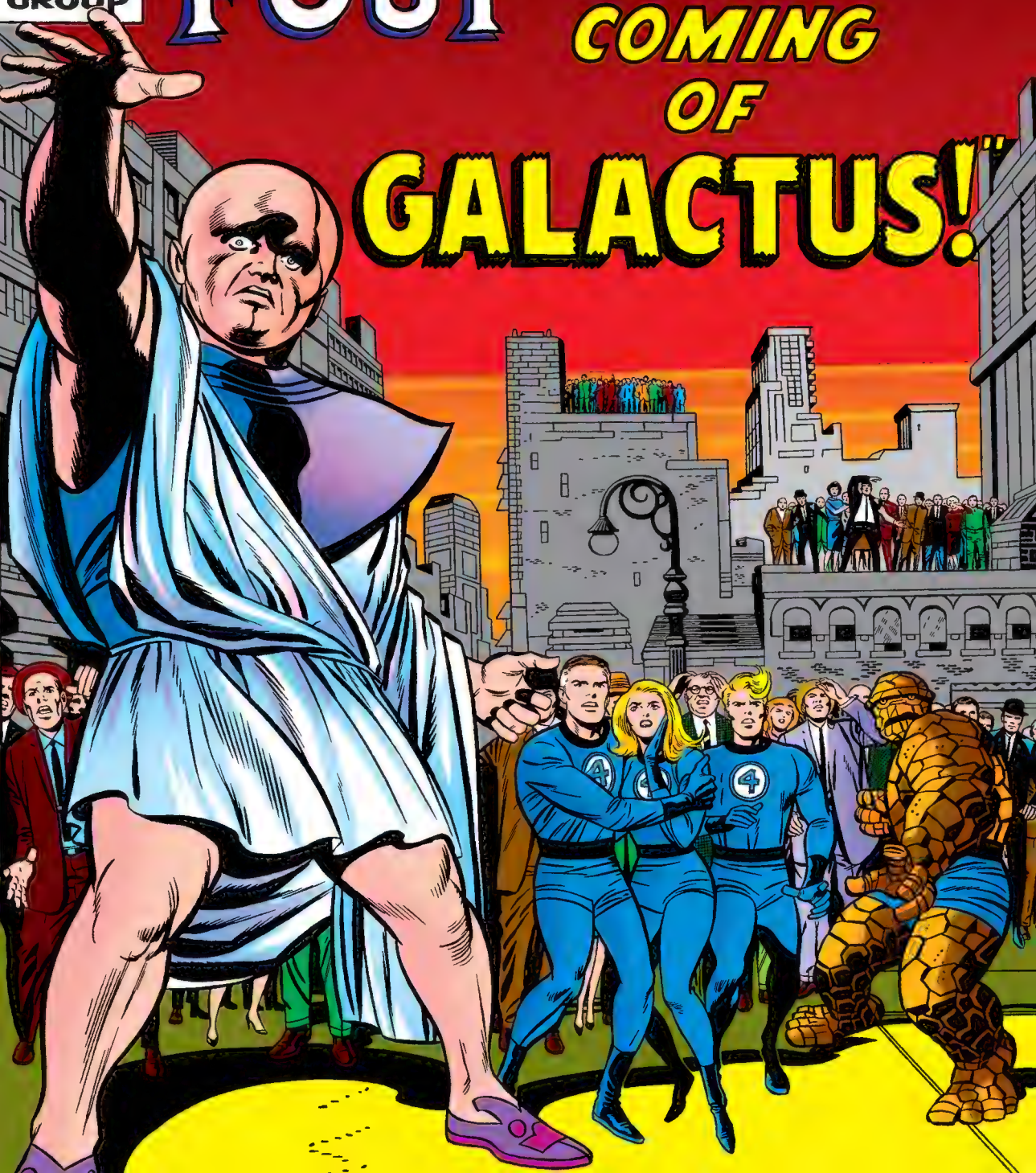
MARVEL
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FOUR

"THE
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GALACTUS!"

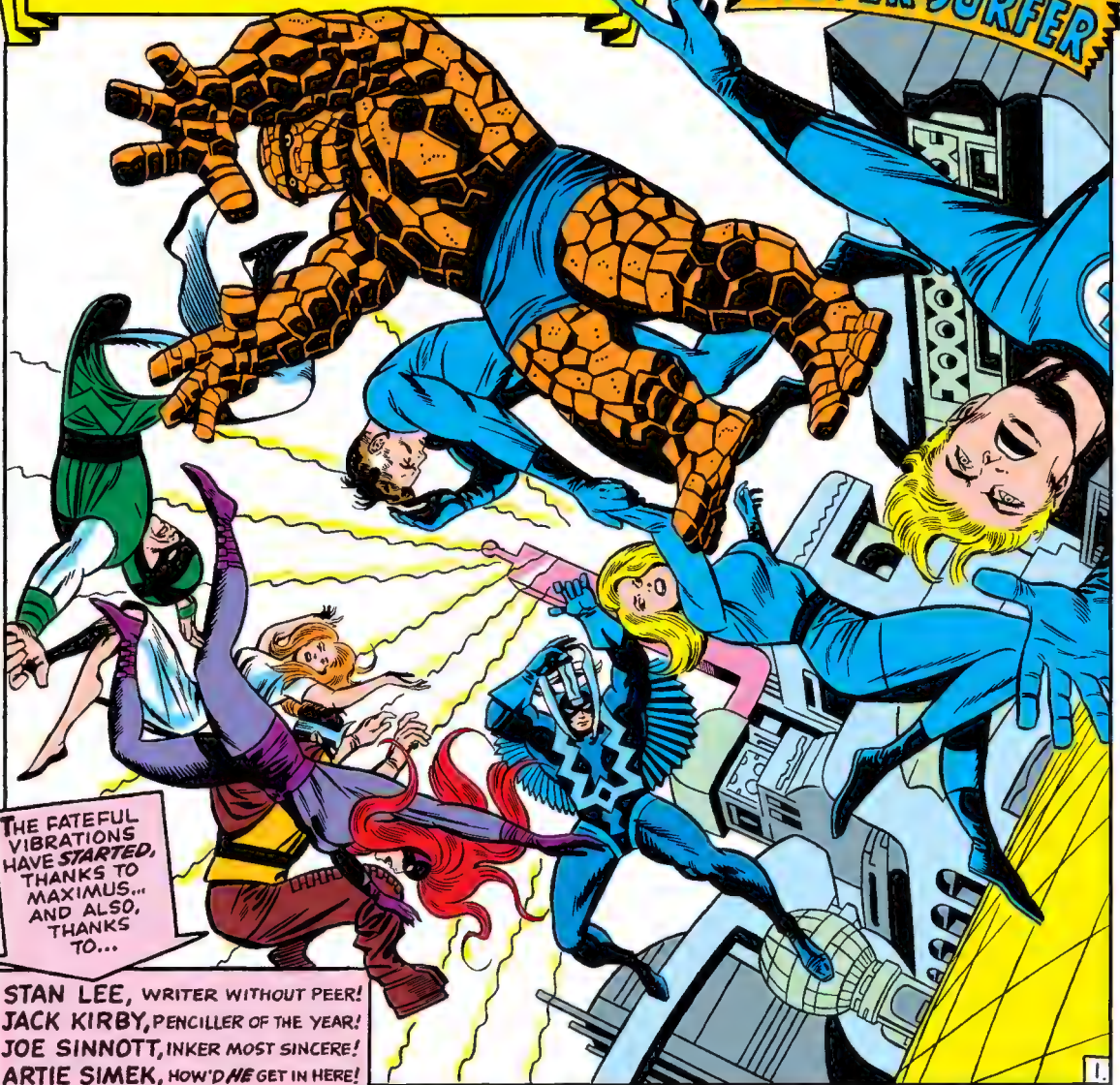


THE FABULOUS **F.F.** FIND WONDERS WITHOUT END, DURING...

"THE COMING OF GALACTUS!"

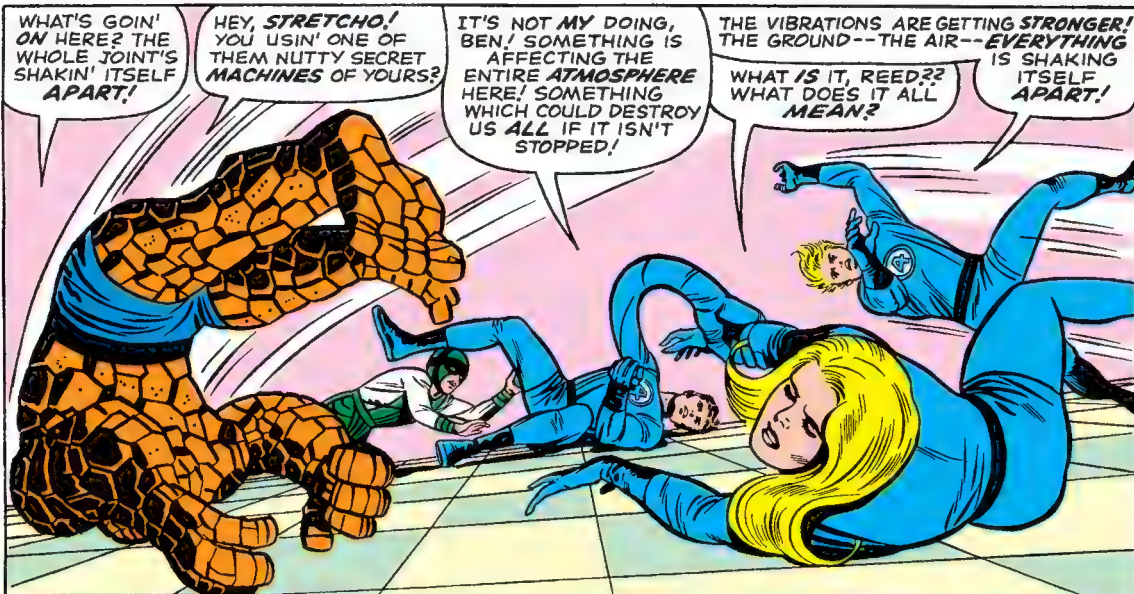
BLACK BOLT'S EVIL BROTHER, MAXIMUS THE MAGNIFICENT, IN A FINAL, DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO REGAIN HIS LOST CROWN, HAS FIRED THE DREADED ATMO GUN WHICH, WHILE HARMLESS TO THE INHUMANS, WILL SET UP VIBRATIONS WHICH CAN END ALL HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH! AND NOW, LET'S JOIN THE PARTY...

ALSO INTRODUCING:
THE SENSATIONAL
SILVER SURFER



THE FATEFUL VIBRATIONS HAVE STARTED, THANKS TO MAXIMUS... AND ALSO, THANKS TO...

STAN LEE, WRITER WITHOUT PEER!
JACK KIRBY, PENCILLER OF THE YEAR!
JOE SINNOTT, INKER MOST SINCERE!
ARTIE SIMEK, HOW'D HE GET IN HERE!



WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? THE WHOLE JOINT'S SHAKIN' ITSELF APART!

HEY, **STRETCHO!** YOU USIN' ONE OF THEM NUTTY SECRET MACHINES OF YOURS?

IT'S NOT MY DOING, BEN! SOMETHING IS AFFECTING THE ENTIRE **ATMOSPHERE** HERE! SOMETHING WHICH COULD DESTROY US **ALL** IF IT ISN'T STOPPED!

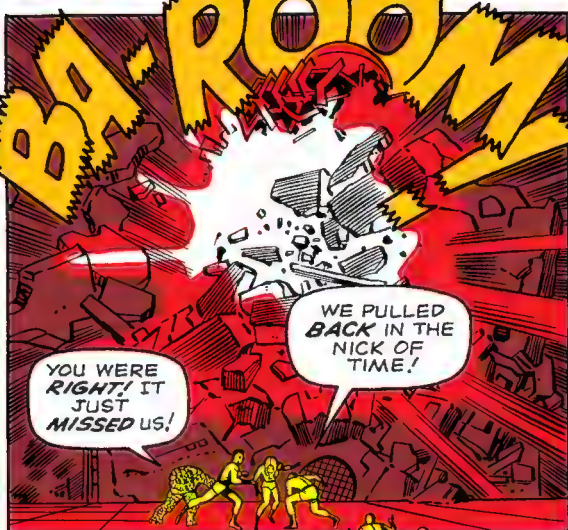
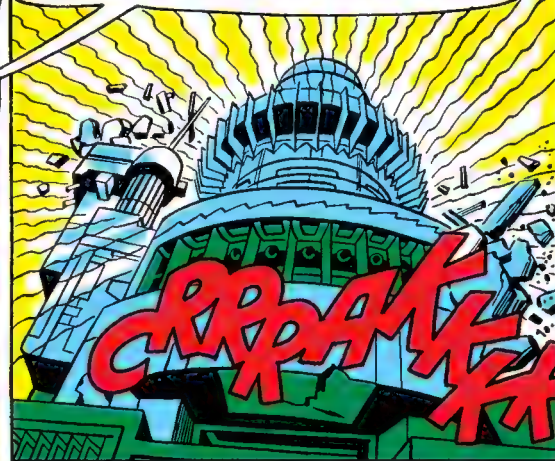
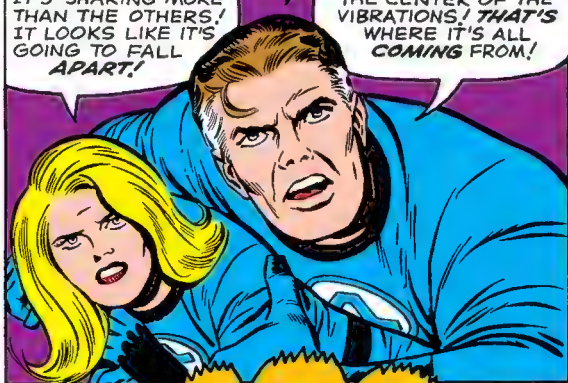
THE VIBRATIONS ARE GETTING **STRONGER!** THE GROUND--THE AIR--**EVERYTHING** IS SHAKING ITSELF APART!
WHAT IS IT, REED?? WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

IT'S NOT A **NATURAL** PHENOMENON, SUE! SOMEONE IS **RESPONSIBLE** FOR IT! SOMEONE WHO IS TAMPERING WITH THE VERY **ATMOSPHERE** AROUND US--USING THOSE VIBRATIONS AS A **WEAPON!**

THAT **BUILDING!!** IT'S SHAKING MORE THAN THE OTHERS! IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO FALL APART!

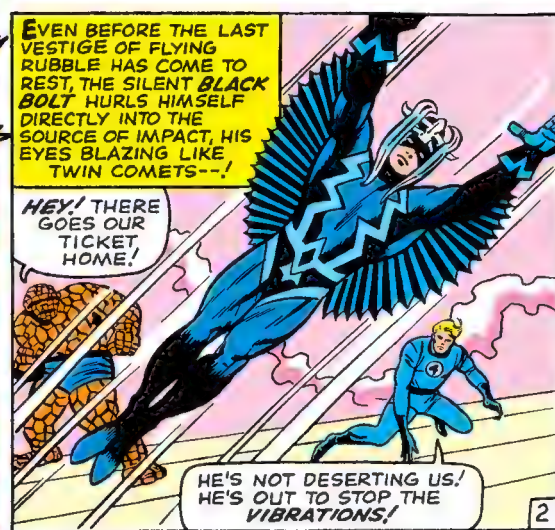
THAT'S IT, SUE! IT'S THE CENTER OF THE VIBRATIONS! **THAT'S** WHERE IT'S ALL COMING FROM!

LOOK OUT!! THE FORCE IS TOO GREAT! THE WALLS CAN'T CONTAIN IT! IT'LL BLAST ITSELF TO BITS WITHIN SECONDS--!! **DUCK!!**



YOU WERE **RIGHT!** IT JUST MISSED US!

WE PULLED **BACK** IN THE NICK OF TIME!

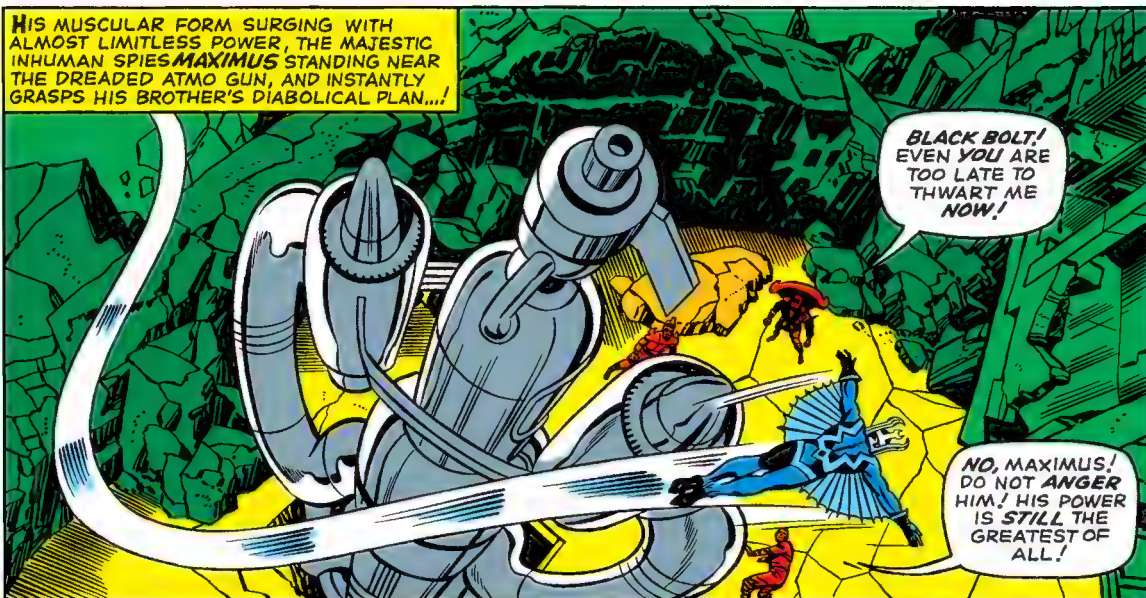


EVEN BEFORE THE LAST VESTIGE OF FLYING RUBBLE HAS COME TO REST, THE SILENT **BLACK BOLT** HURLS HIMSELF DIRECTLY INTO THE SOURCE OF IMPACT, HIS EYES BLAZING LIKE **TWIN COMETS--!**

HEY! THERE GOES OUR **TICKET HOME!**

HE'S NOT DESERTING US! HE'S OUT TO STOP THE **VIBRATIONS!**

HIS MUSCULAR FORM SURGING WITH ALMOST LIMITLESS POWER, THE MAJESTIC INHUMAN SPIES **MAXIMUS** STANDING NEAR THE DREADED ATMO GUN, AND INSTANTLY GRASPS HIS BROTHER'S DIABOLICAL PLAN....!



SPARE ME, BLACK BOLT! I HAD NO HAND IN THIS! IT IS ALL THE DOING OF **MAXIMUS**! I AM ONLY THE **SEEKER**--YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, MY LORD!

BASE COWARD! WHEN THE CROWN ONCE MORE IS **MINE**, I SHALL REMEMBER THIS MOMENT, **SEEKER**! AND YOU SHALL PAY FOR IT--WITH YOUR **LIFE**!



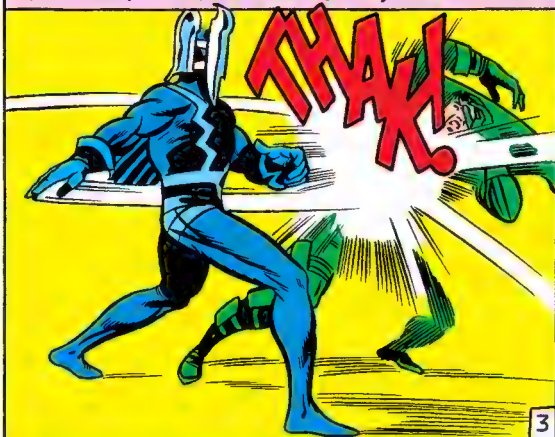
THE DEED IS **DONE**, BLACK BOLT! BY NOW, ALL HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH HAS BEEN **ENDED**! ONLY WE **INHUMANS** REMAIN! THE ENTIRE PLANET IS **OURS**, MY SPEECHLESS BROTHER!

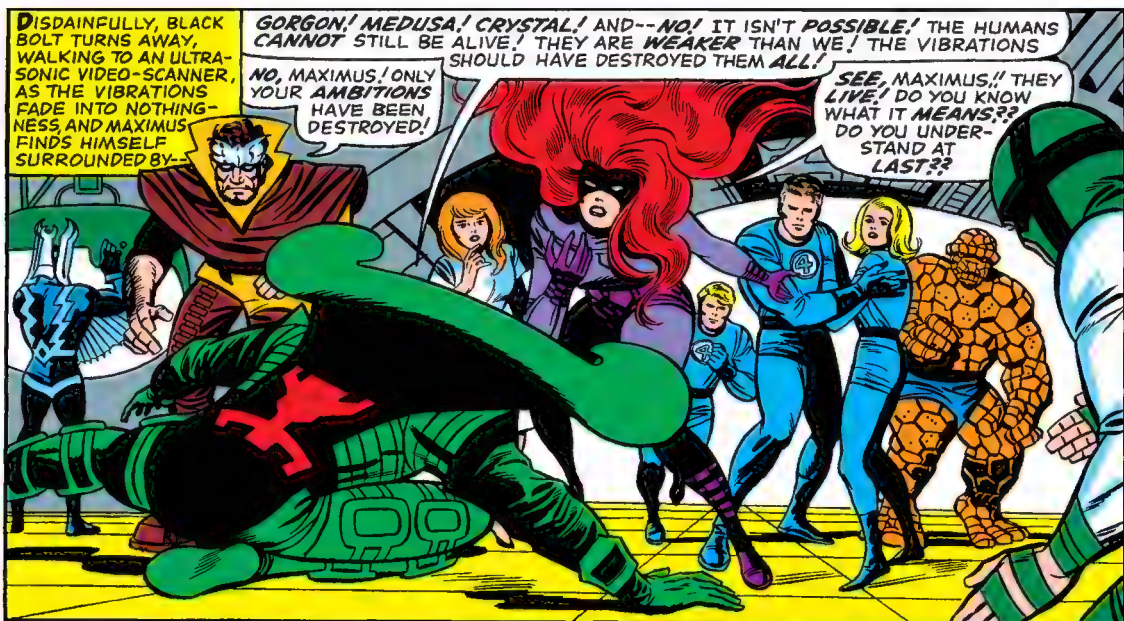


AND, WHEN OUR PEOPLE LEARN THAT IT WAS **I** WHO GAVE THEM DOMINION OVER EARTH, THEY WILL TEAR THAT CROWN FROM YOUR HEAD, AND RESTORE IT TO **MAXIMUS**! YES, I WAS **BORN** TO RULE!



FOR THE SPACE OF A DOZEN HEARTBEATS, **BLACK BOLT** STANDS MOTIONLESS, STARING AT THE MAN WHO CHORTLES BEFORE HIM--AS THOUGH SEEING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME! AND THEN, IN A GESTURE OF ABJECT **LOATHING**, OF SHEER **CONTEMPT**, HE STRIKES--!





BUT THEN, THE STRAIN OF SEEING HIS PLAN OF CONQUEST FADE BEFORE HIS EYES PROVES TOO MUCH FOR THE EX-MONARCH, AS HE LEAPS FORWARD WITH A MANIACAL CRY--!



NO! YOU'LL NEVER REJOIN THE HUMANS! I'LL DEFEAT YOU YET! YOU'LL BE PRISONERS OF THE GREAT REFUGE FOREVER!!

BY REVERSING THE CHARGE ON MY ATMO GUN, I CAN CREATE A NEGATIVE ZONE AROUND OUR LAND!

A ZONE THAT NOTHING CAN PENETRATE! THE VICTORY SHALL STILL BE MINE! FOR I AM MAXIMUS THE MAGNIFICENT!!



HE--HE DID IT-- BEFORE ANYONE COULD STOP HIM!



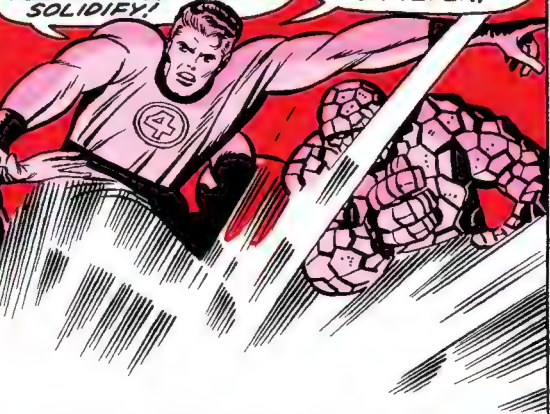
REED! THE GROUND IS BEGINNING TO GLOW! WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US??



NO TIME TO TALK! NOTHING CAN PENETRATE A NEGATIVE ZONE!! BUT, IT WILL TAKE A FEW MORE SECONDS TO SOLIDIFY!



BEN! JOHNNY! FOLLOW US! IT'S GOT TO BE NOW-- OR NEVER!



I'VE WON! I'VE WON! NOTHING CAN TAKE MY PEOPLE FROM ME NOW!



WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOR ALL TIME! AND THE CROWN SHALL BE MINE AGAIN!

I'VE BEATEN BLACK BOLT AT LAST!

THE NEGATIVE ZONE IS SOLIDIFYING TOO QUICKLY, SUE! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS YOUR FORCE FIELD! THROW IT AROUND US-- FAST!

ONE BARRIER CAN'T ABSORB ANOTHER! IT'LL GET US THRU!

HEY! WHERE'S THE KID? I DON'T SEE JOHNNY!



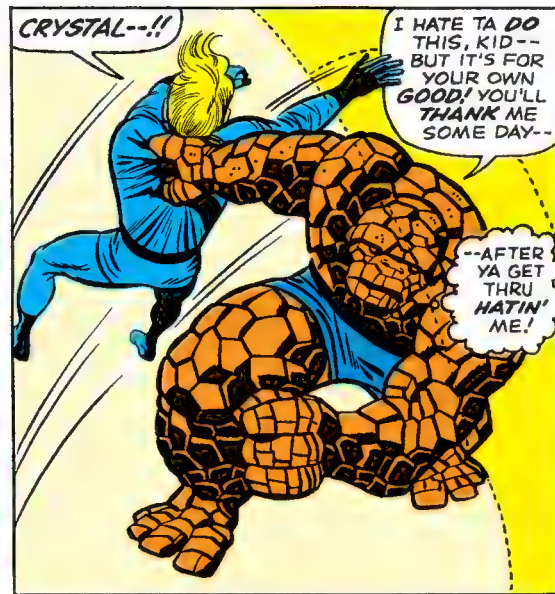


THERE HE IS! JOHNNY, COME ON! YER LIABLE TO BE STUCK THERE FOREVER!

I DON'T CARE! I WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT CRYSTAL! SHE'S GOT TO COME WITH US!

JOHNNY! JOHNNY! DON'T LEAVE ME! I LOVE YOU, JOHNNY--!

NO, CRYSTAL! YOUR PLACE IS HERE, WITH US! LET HIM GO! LET HIM GO!



CRYSTAL--!!

I HATE TA DO THIS, KID-- BUT IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! YOU'LL THANK ME SOME DAY--

--AFTER YA GET THRU HATIN' ME!

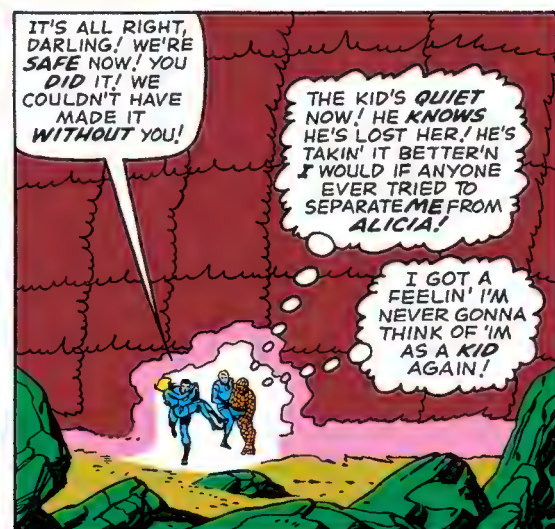


GOOD WORK, BEN! ANOTHER SECOND WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO LATE! THE NEGATIVE ZONE IS ALMOST COMPLETELY SOLID BY NOW!

LET ME GO! WHAT GOOD'S BEING FREE IF I CAN'T HAVE CRYSTAL, I WANT TO STAY WITH HER! LET GO--!!

IT'S TOO LATE, KID! YA COULDN'T GET BACK NOW EVEN IF WE HELPED YA!

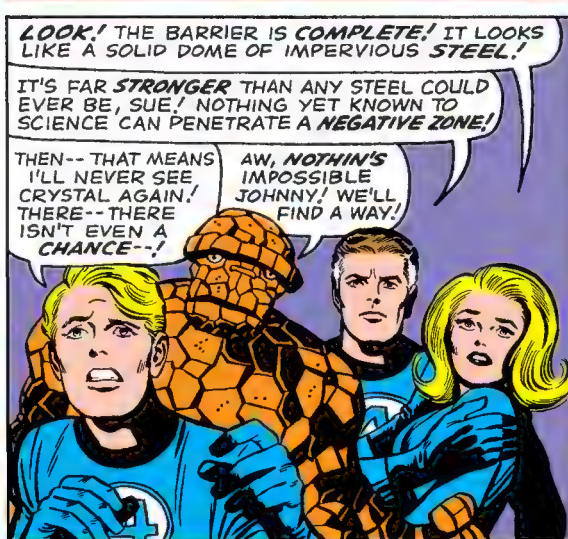
HURRY, REED-- HURRY! I CAN'T HOLD THE FORCE FIELD MUCH LONGER-- THE PRESSURE IS TOO STRONG!



IT'S ALL RIGHT, DARLING! WE'RE SAFE NOW! YOU DID IT! WE COULDN'T HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU!

THE KID'S QUIET NOW! HE KNOWS HE'S LOST HER! HE'S TAKIN' IT BETTER'N I WOULD IF ANYONE EVER TRIED TO SEPARATE ME FROM ALICIA!

I GOT A FEELIN' I'M NEVER GONNA THINK OF 'IM AS A KID AGAIN!



LOOK! THE BARRIER IS COMPLETE! IT LOOKS LIKE A SOLID DOME OF IMPERVIOUS STEEL!

IT'S FAR STRONGER THAN ANY STEEL COULD EVER BE, SUE! NOTHING YET KNOWN TO SCIENCE CAN PENETRATE A NEGATIVE ZONE!

THEN-- THAT MEANS I'LL NEVER SEE CRYSTAL AGAIN! THERE-- THERE ISN'T EVEN A CHANCE--!

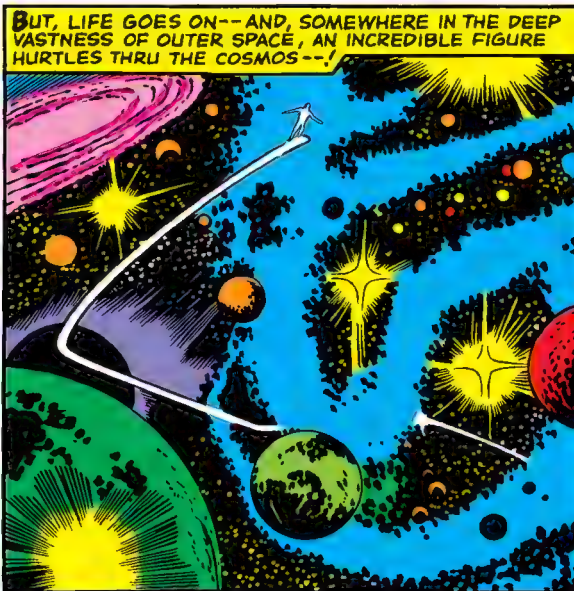
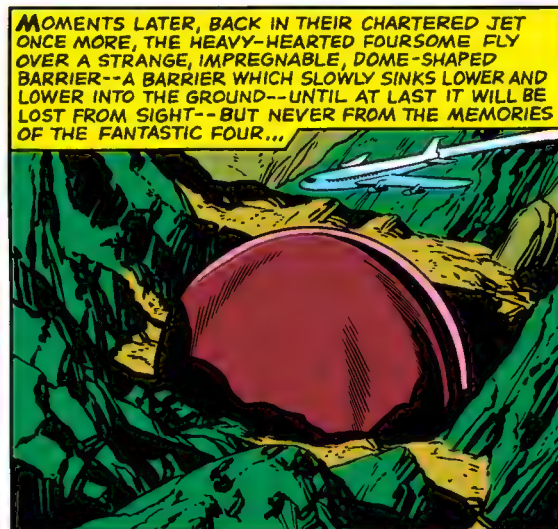
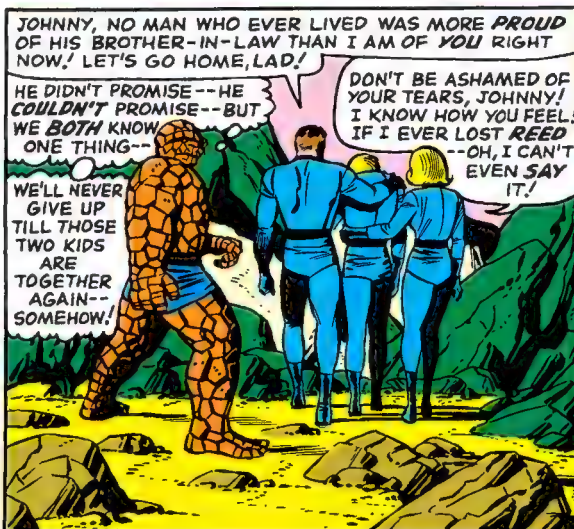
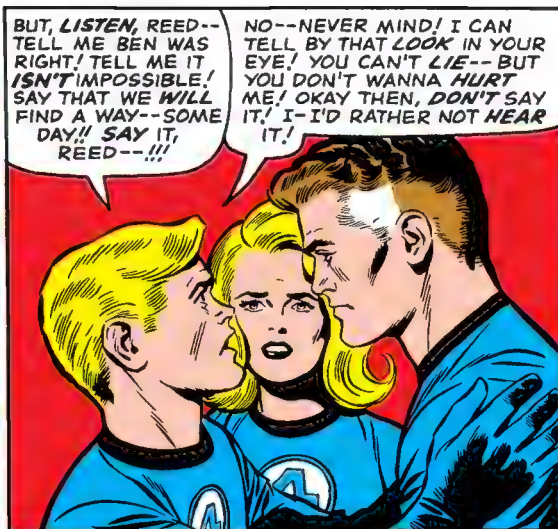
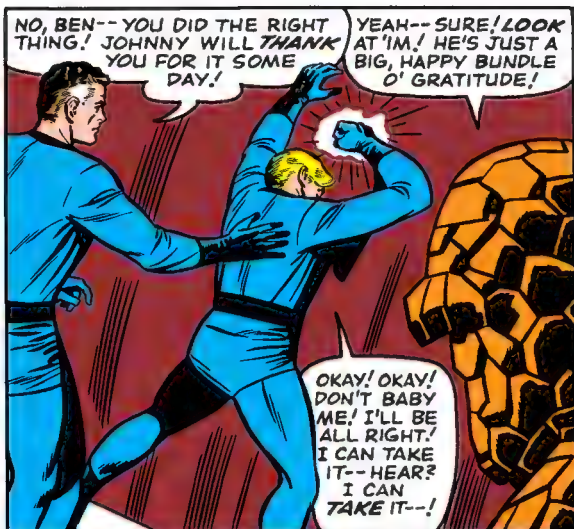
AW, NOTHIN'S IMPOSSIBLE JOHNNY! WE'LL FIND A WAY!

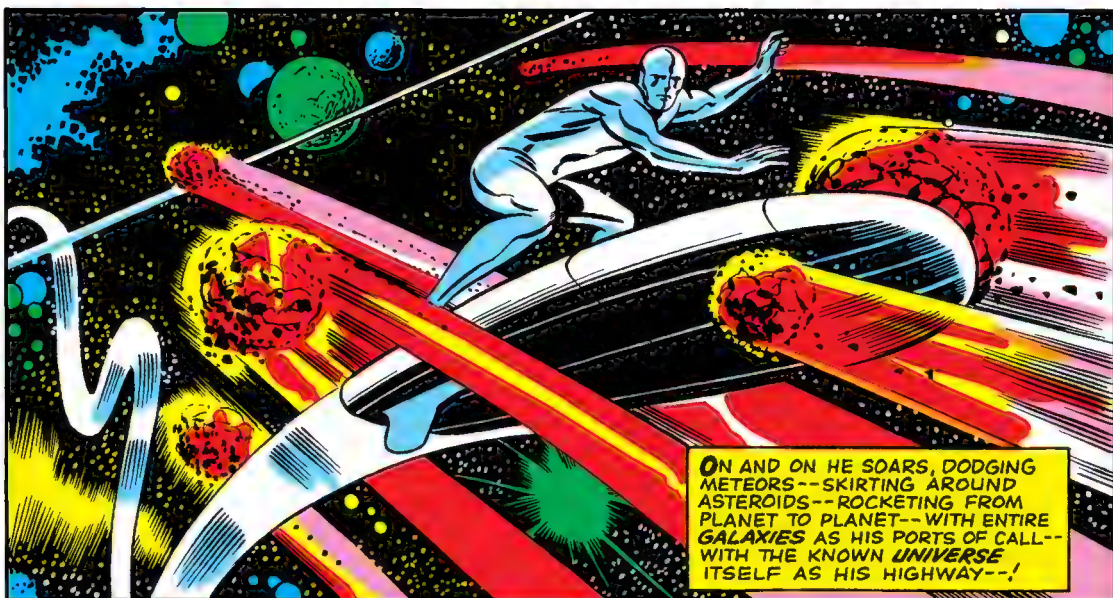


YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT! THERE ISN'T ANY WAY! YOU KNOW THERE ISN'T! I'VE LOST HER FOREVER!

AND IT'S YOUR FAULT! IF NOT FOR YOU, I'D STILL BE THERE-- WITH HER! CRYSTAL! CRYSTAL! I'LL COME BACK TO YOU-- SOMEHOW! CRYSTAL--!!

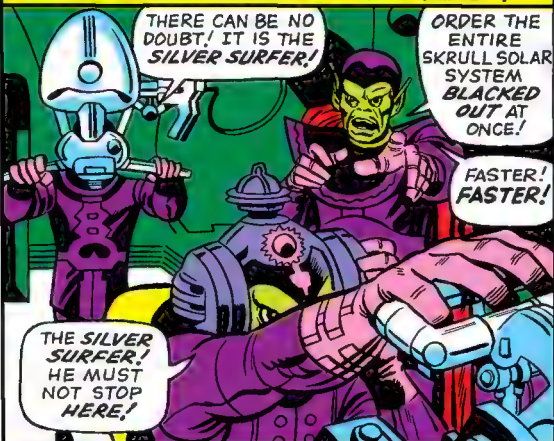
YOU'RE WASTIN' YER TIME! C'MON, TAKE A POKE AT ME-- IT'LL MAKE YA FEEL BETTER! AND-- I DESERVE IT!





ON AND ON HE SOARS, DODGING METEORS--SKIRTING AROUND ASTEROIDS--ROCKETING FROM PLANET TO PLANET--WITH ENTIRE GALAXIES AS HIS PORTS OF CALL-- WITH THE KNOWN *UNIVERSE* ITSELF AS HIS HIGHWAY--!

AND, IN THE FIFTH QUADRANT OF THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY, AN UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCE FROM THE PLANET *EARTH*, THERE IS GREAT CONSTERNATION ON THE HOME PLANET OF THE *SKRULLS*--!



THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT! IT IS THE *SILVER SURFER*!

ORDER THE ENTIRE SKRULL SOLAR SYSTEM *BLACKED OUT* AT ONCE!

FASTER! FASTER!

THE *SILVER SURFER*! HE MUST NOT STOP *HERE*!

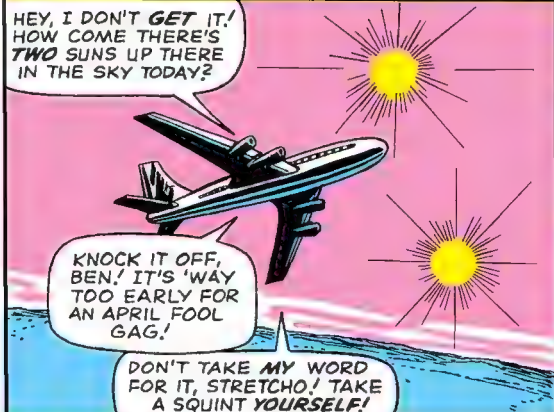
WITH ALL OUR POWER, MY LORD--WITH ALL OUR WEAPONS, AND OUR ARMAMENTS--WHY DO WE SO FEAR THE LONE *SILVER SURFER*?

IT IS NOT MERELY *HIM*, YOU FOOL!! HAVE YOU NOT STUDIED YOUR COSMIC HISTORY?

WHEREVER *HE* APPEARS, IT IS CERTAIN THAT *GALACTUS* CAN NOT BE VERY FAR BEHIND!



AND NOW, THRU THE MAGIC OF OUR LIMITLESS IMAGINATIONS, WE RETURN AGAIN TO THE VERDANT PLANET *EARTH*, WHERE WE FIND THE WORLD'S MOST FABULOUS QUARTET COMPLETING THE LAST LEG OF THEIR FATEFUL JOURNEY...



HEY, I DON'T *GET* IT! HOW COME THERE'S *TWO* SUNS UP THERE IN THE SKY TODAY?

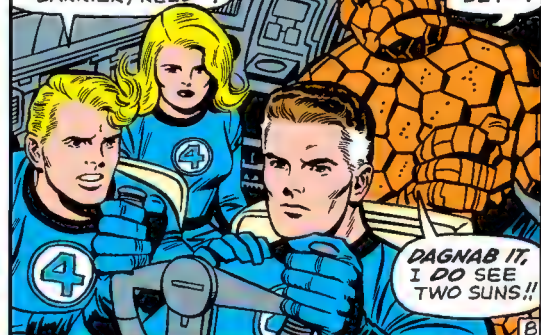
KNOCK IT OFF, BEN! IT'S WAY TOO EARLY FOR AN APRIL FOOL GAG!

DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, STRETCHO! TAKE A SQUINT YOURSELF!

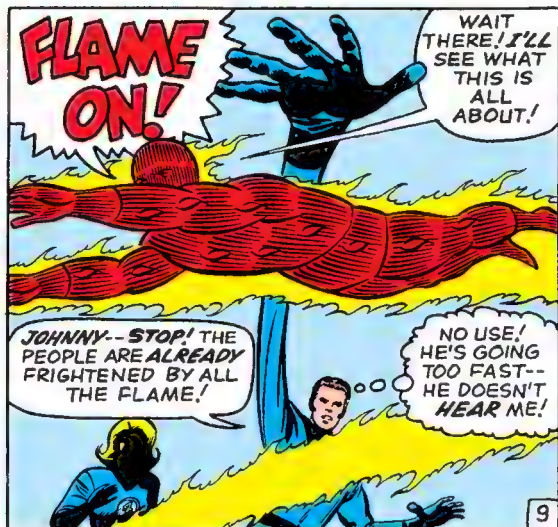
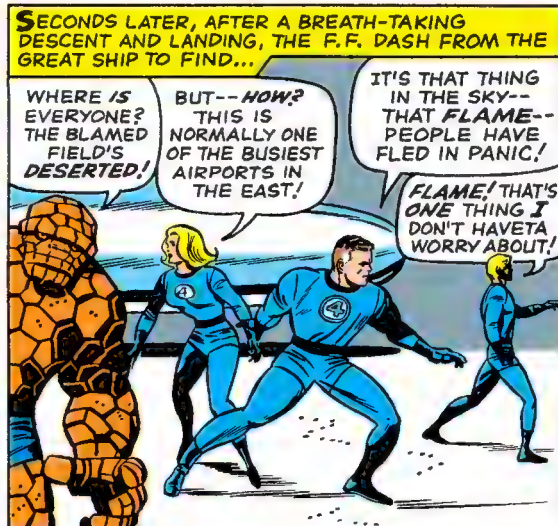
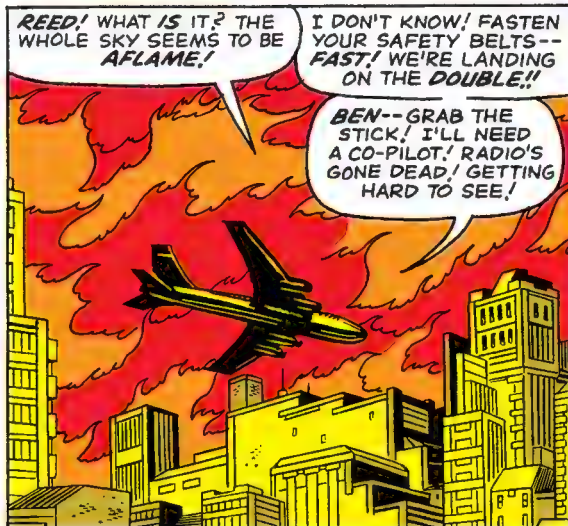
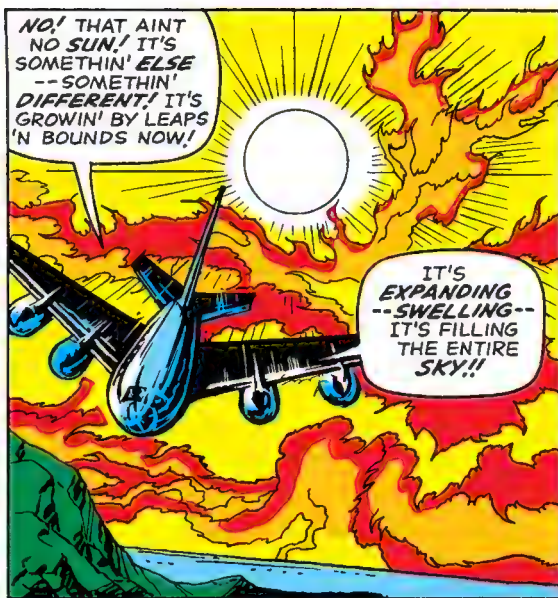
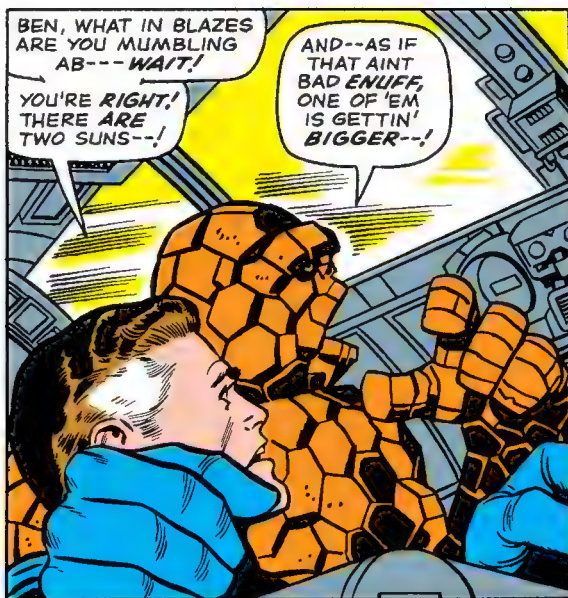
SORRY, BEN! I'VE GOT TO PREPARE FOR OUR *LANDING* NOW! SAVE YOUR LITTLE PARTY PRANKS FOR LATER, OKAY?

IF THINGS ARE QUIET BACK HOME, MAYBE YOU CAN START WORKING ON A WAY TO CRACK THAT BARRIER, REED--!

MEBBE I AM READY FOR THE FUNNY FARM, BUT--!

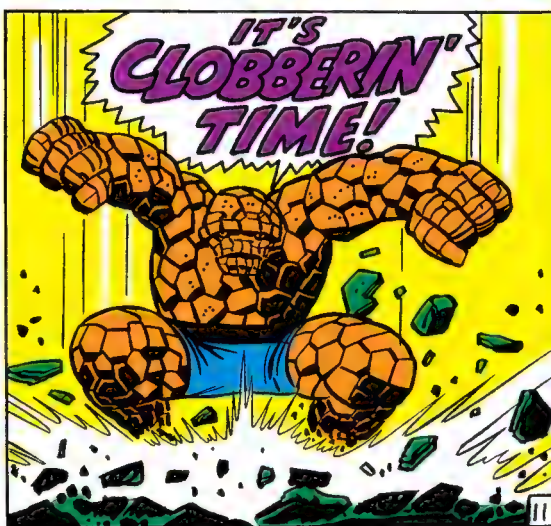
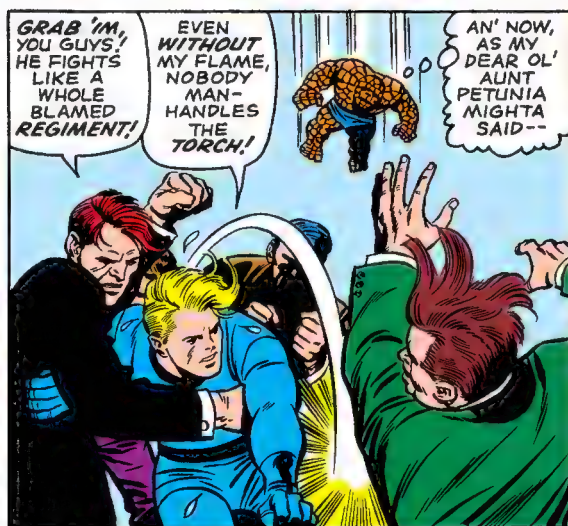
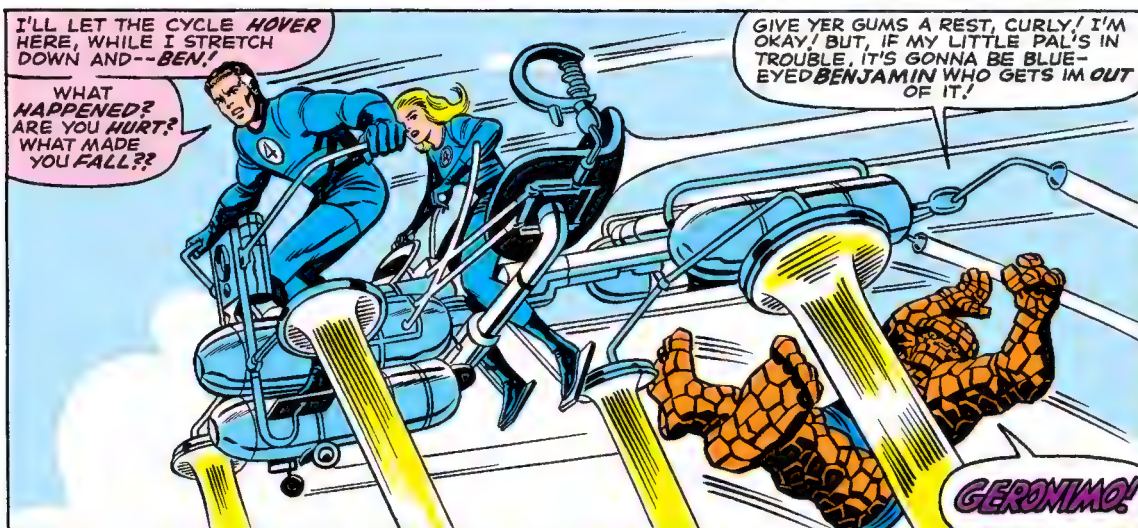
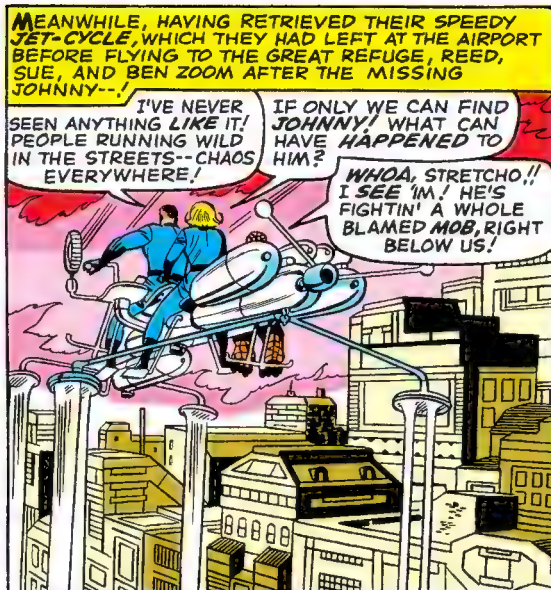
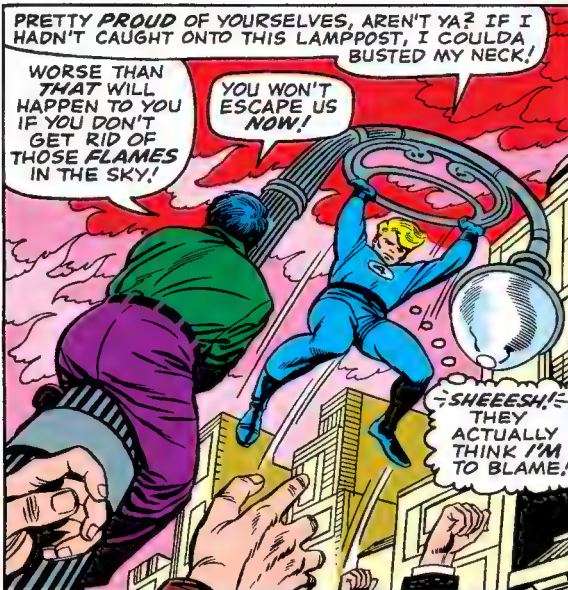


DAGNAB IT, I DO SEE *TWO* SUNS!!



QUICKLY REACHING THE HEART OF THE GREAT CITY, THE HUMAN TORCH SEES A SIGHT HE IS DESTINED NEVER TO FORGET--THE SIGHT OF A MIGHTY METROPOLIS IN THE DREAD GRIP OF PANIC--!





HEARING THE **THING'S** BLOOD-CURDLING BATTLE CRY, THE MILLING MOB INSTANTLY LOSES ITS ZEST FOR BATTLE AS THE TORCH'S ATTACKERS TAKE TO THEIR HEELS--

IT'S THE **THING!**
LEMMIE OUTTA HERE!
GANGWAY!!

BEN! BOY,
ARE YOU A
SIGHT FOR
SORE EYES!

THE **THING!**
HE'S
COMIN'
RIGHT
TOWARDS
US! **LOOK
OUT!
RUN!**



BUT, THERE ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE **ONE WISE-GUY** IN EVERY CROWD--!

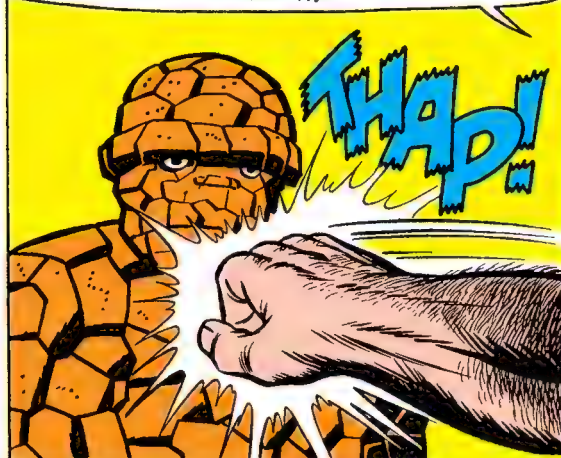
SO YOU'RE THE
BIG, BAD **THING**,
HUH? WELL, MISTER,
YOU DON'T LOOK
SO TOUGH
TO ME!

YER BREATHIN'
ON MY BABY
BLUES,
BUTTERCUP!

NOW TAKE OFF,
BEFORE I BAT
YA ALL THE WAY
FROM HERE TA
YANCY STREET!



YEAH? IT'S TIME SOMEONE SHOWED YA UP FOR THE PHONY YOU ARE-- AND I'M THE GUY WHO'S GONNA DO IT!



STILL STANDIN',
HUH? WELL, A
BELT IN THE
LABONZZA WILL
KNOCK THE WIND
OUTTA YOUR
SAILS!

OWWW!
MY
KNUCKLES!!



DON'T WORRY, TOUGH GUY!
THEY AINT GONNA BE
HURTIN' YA FER LONG--!



YA CAN SLEEP IT OFF HERE, PAL! YA'LL BE SNAPPIN' OUTTA IT IN A COUPLE HOURS! THEN, THINK OF THE FUN YA'LL HAVE IN THE EMERGENCY WARD, TELLIN' EVERYBODY WHAT A **PHONY** I AM!

HEY, BEN! BEN--
LOOK!

THE SKY'S ALL **CLEAR** AGAIN! THE FLAMES ARE **GONE!** I-I DON'T **GET IT!**

THAT MAKES **TWO** OF US! LET'S SEE IF OL' **STRETCHO** HAS THE ANSWER! **THOUGH**, EVEN IF HE **DON'T**, THAT WON'T STOP 'IM FROM **CHWIN'** OUR EARS OFF **ANYHOW!**

JOHNNY, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE OFF ON YOUR OWN THAT WAY! IF NOT FOR BEN, YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN **HURT!**

LET IT RIDE, HONEY! HE DOESN'T NEED **LECTURING** NOW!

NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO **HERE**, GUYS! WHAT SAY WE HEAD **BACK** TO OUR **HQ?**

BUT WHAT'S BEEN **HAPPENING**, REED? HAVEN'T YOU ANY **IDEAS?**

MEBBE THEY'RE JUST **ADVERTISIN'** SOME NEW **JOSEPH E. LEVINE** **MOVIE!**

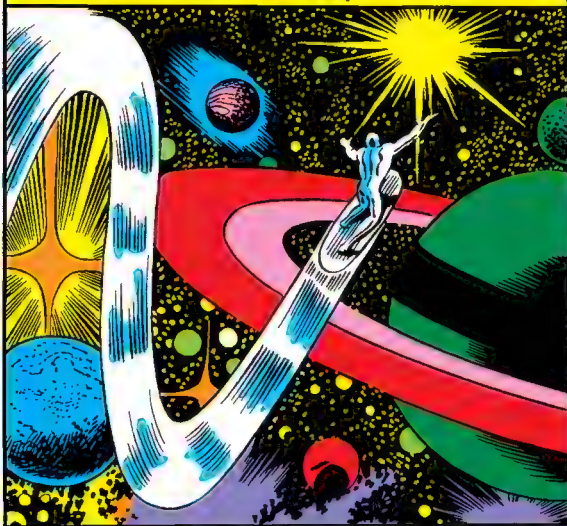
ALL WE CAN BE **SURE** OF IS--WE'RE FACING A **POWER** THAT MAY BE **GREATER** THAN ANY WE'VE EVER **BATTLED** BEFORE!

NOW CLIMB **ABOARD!** I'M **ANXIOUS** TO **WORK** THIS **OUT** IN THE **LAB!**

EVEN AS REED SPEAKS, A GIGANTIC STAR IN A DISTANT GALAXY **EXPLODES**, TRANSFORMING ITSELF INTO A MIGHTY **SUPER-NOVA!** AND, AS THE **INDESCRIBABLE** IMPACT FILLS THE HEAVENS, THE **ESCAPING** GASES CATCH THE **SILVER SURFER**, FLINGING HIM OUTWARD ACROSS THE **ENDLESS VOID...**

FURTHER AND FURTHER TRAVELS THE STRANGE SPACE WANDERER, RIDING THE **SHOCK WAVES**, THE **ROLLING GASES**, ACROSS **COUNTLESS** LIGHT YEARS -- HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE **MILKY WAY**, IN WHICH NESTLES OUR OWN **SOLAR SYSTEM** -- AND THE **PLANET EARTH!**

AND THEN AT LAST HE FINDS WHAT HE HAS BEEN SEEKING--A SUN--*OUR* SUN-- A TRUE G-TYPE STAR!



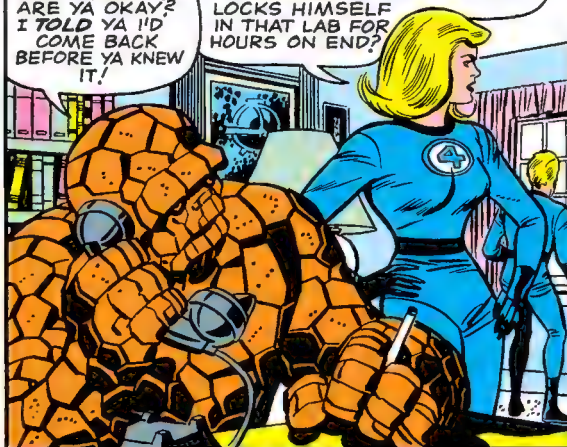
INSTANTLY HE REALIZES THAT SUCH A SUN MUST CONTAIN, AMONG ITS SATELLITES, AT LEAST *ONE* PLANET WITH THE ENERGY AND THE ELEMENTAL RESOURCES SO NECESSARY TO THE GREAT *GALACTUS*!



BUT, BY NOW, THE F.F. HAVE REACHED THE BAXTER BUILDING, WHERE WE FIND...

ALICIA, BABY! ARE YA OKAY? I TOLD YA I'D COME BACK BEFORE YA KNEW IT!

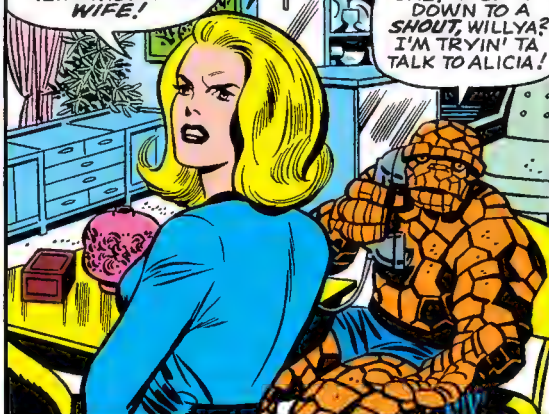
WHAT DOES REED EXPECT ME TO DO WHILE HE LOCKS HIMSELF IN THAT LAB FOR HOURS ON END?



THE FLAMES IN THE SKY ARE *GONE*! THE DANGER SEEMS TO BE OVER! YOU'D THINK HE'D REMEMBER HIS *WIFE*!

EVEN MRS. REED RICHARDS MIGHT LIKE TO BE TAKEN OUT TO *DINNER* ONCE IN A WHILE!

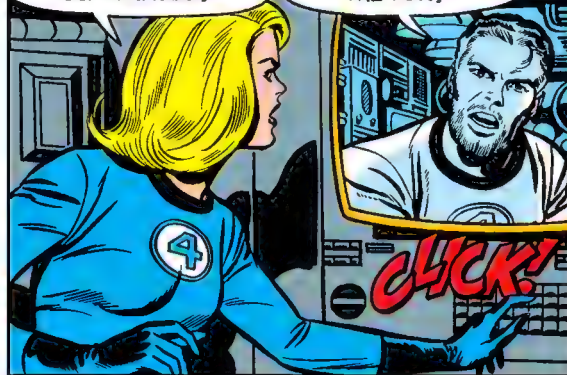
C'MON, SUSIE GAL, HOLD IT DOWN TO A *SHOUT*, WILL YA? I'M TRYIN' TA TALK TO ALICIA!



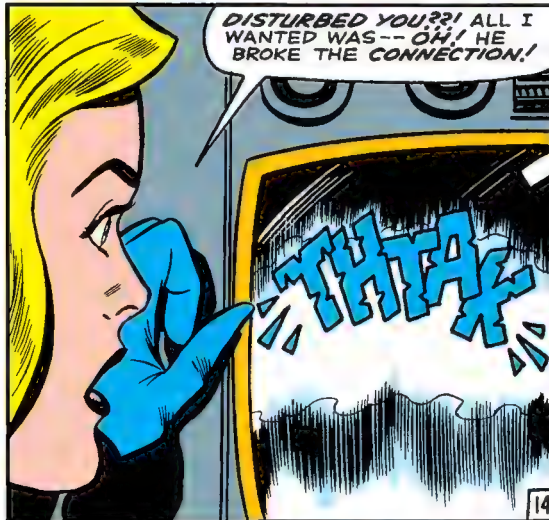
WELL, I'VE NO INTENTION OF BEING COMPLETELY *IGNORED* WHILE HE JUGGLES THOSE TEST TUBES OF HIS FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT!

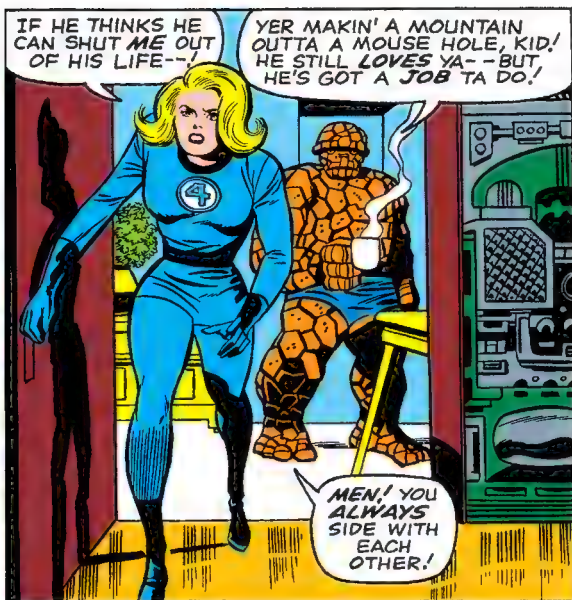
REED! LOOK AT YOU! YOU HAVEN'T EVEN *SHAVED*! AND YOU MUST BE *STARVED*!

FOR THE LOVE OF *PETE*, GIRL, IS THAT WHAT YOU DISTURBED ME FOR?



DISTURBED YOU??! ALL I WANTED WAS-- *OH*! HE BROKE THE CONNECTION!





IF HE THINKS HE CAN SHUT ME OUT OF HIS LIFE--!

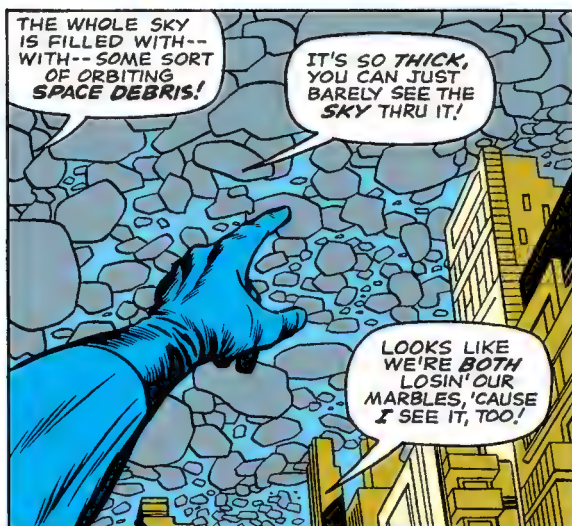
YER MAKIN' A MOUNTAIN OUTTA A MOUSE HOLE, KID! HE STILL *LOVES YA*--BUT HE'S GOT A *JOB* TA DO!

MEN! YOU ALWAYS SIDE WITH EACH OTHER!



HEY, JOHNNY-- HOW COME ALL FEMALES IS SO--
UH OH! *NOW* WADDAYA LOOKIN' AT??

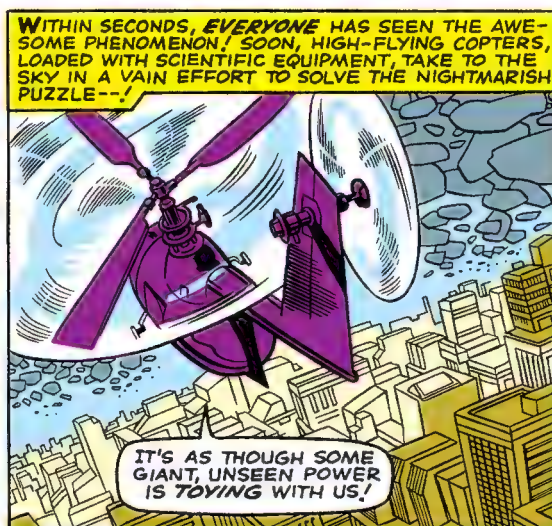
I DON'T GET IT, BEN! IT'S LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD IS GOIN' *CRAZY*! LOOK OUT HERE AND TELL ME IF I'M *SEEING* THINGS!



THE WHOLE SKY IS FILLED WITH-- WITH-- SOME SORT OF ORBITING *SPACE DEBRIS*!

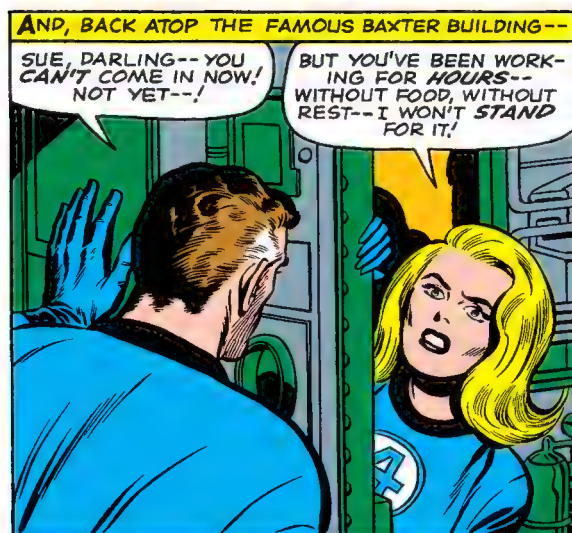
IT'S SO *THICK*, YOU CAN JUST BARELY SEE THE *SKY* THRU IT!

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE *BOTH* LOSIN' OUR MARBLES, 'CAUSE I SEE IT, TOO!



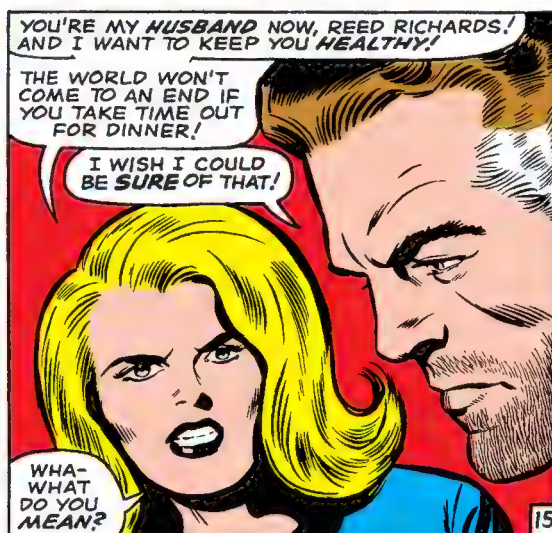
WITHIN SECONDS, *EVERYONE* HAS SEEN THE AWE-SOME PHENOMENON! SOON, HIGH-FLYING COPTERS, LOADED WITH SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, TAKE TO THE SKY IN A VAIN EFFORT TO SOLVE THE NIGHTMARISH PUZZLE--!

IT'S AS THOUGH SOME GIANT, UNSEEN POWER IS *TOYING* WITH US!



SUE, DARLING-- YOU CAN'T COME IN NOW! NOT YET--!

BUT YOU'VE BEEN WORKING FOR *HOURS*-- WITHOUT FOOD, WITHOUT REST-- I WON'T *STAND* FOR IT!

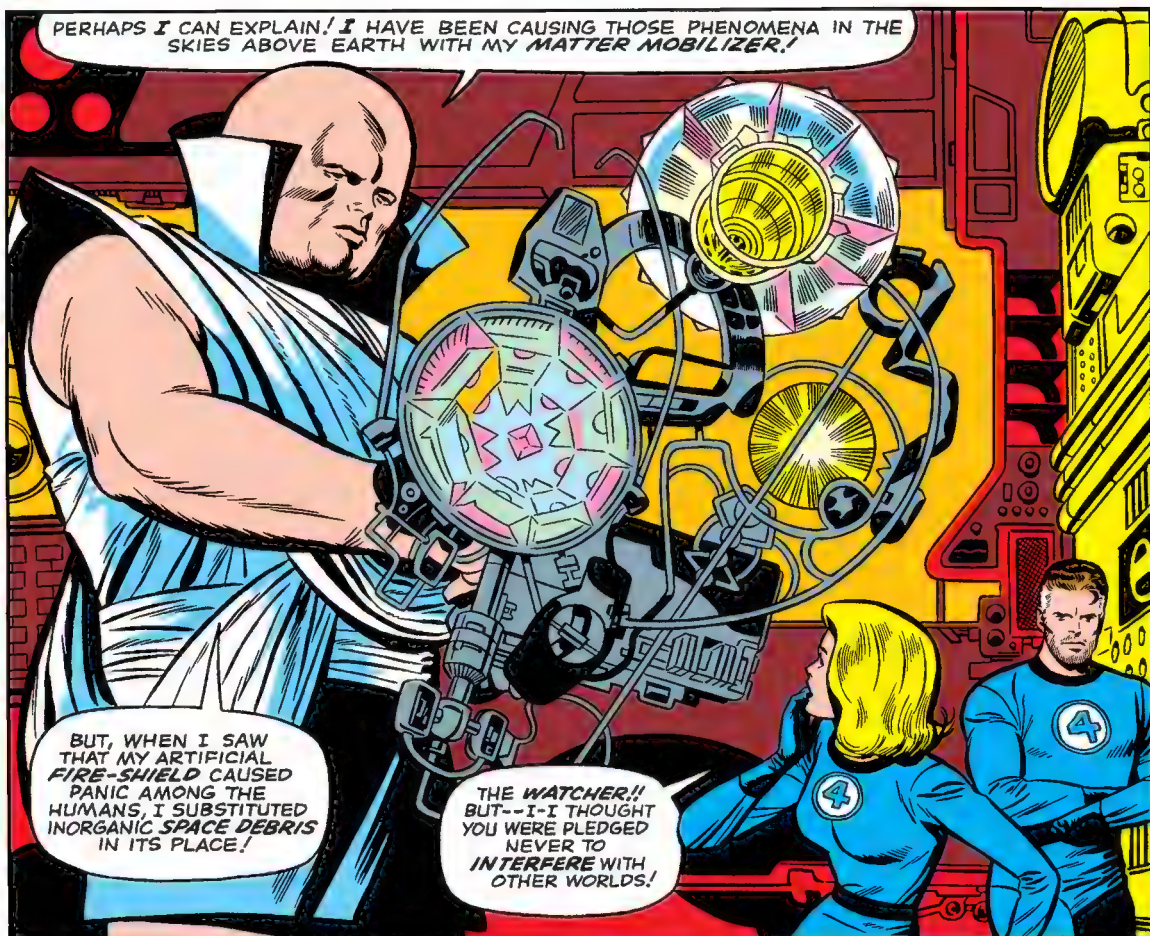


YOU'RE MY *HUSBAND* NOW, REED RICHARDS! AND I WANT TO KEEP YOU *HEALTHY*!

THE WORLD WON'T COME TO AN END IF YOU TAKE TIME OUT FOR DINNER!

I WISH I COULD BE *SURE* OF THAT!

WHA-- WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*?



PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN! I HAVE BEEN CAUSING THOSE PHENOMENA IN THE SKIES ABOVE EARTH WITH MY *MATTER MOBILIZER*!

BUT, WHEN I SAW THAT MY ARTIFICIAL *FIRE-SHIELD* CAUSED PANIC AMONG THE HUMANS, I SUBSTITUTED INORGANIC *SPACE DEBRIS* IN ITS PLACE!

THE *WATCHER*!! BUT--I-I THOUGHT YOU WERE PLEDGED NEVER TO *INTERFERE* WITH OTHER WORLDS!

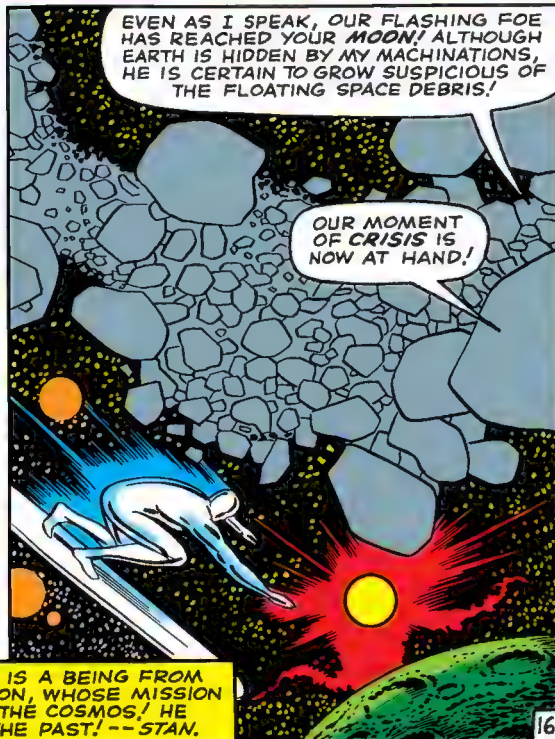


TRUE! BUT THE DANGER IS TOO GREAT THIS TIME! THE *SILVER SURFER* IS ON THE WAY!

HE IS THE ADVANCE SCOUT FOR *GALACTUS*! GALACTUS, WHO DRAINS ENTIRE PLANETS OF THEIR ELEMENTS, AND THEN LEAVES THEM DRY, UNABLE TO SUPPORT LIFE!

I COULD NOT STAND BY AND SEE THIS HAPPEN TO *EARTH*! THAT IS WHY I AM TRYING TO *CONCEAL* YOUR PLANET FROM THE *SILVER SURFER*!

FOR, OF ALL WHO INHABIT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE, ONLY *GALACTUS* HAS POWER ENOUGH TO MATCH MY OWN!*

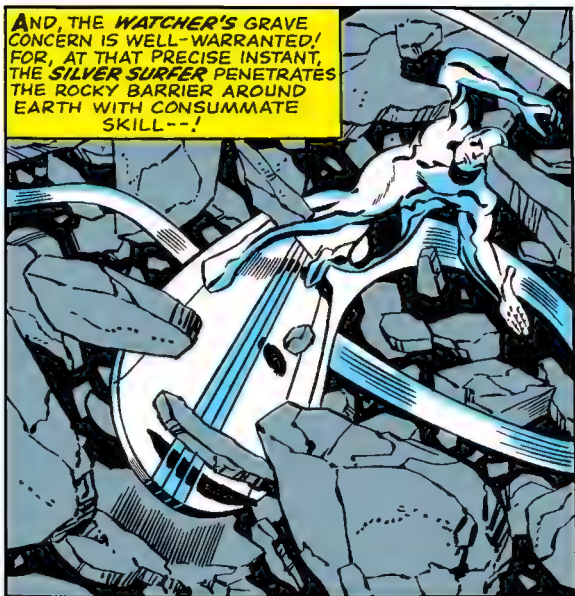


EVEN AS I SPEAK, OUR FLASHING FOE HAS REACHED YOUR *MOON*! ALTHOUGH EARTH IS HIDDEN BY MY MACHINATIONS, HE IS CERTAIN TO GROW SUSPICIOUS OF THE FLOATING SPACE DEBRIS!

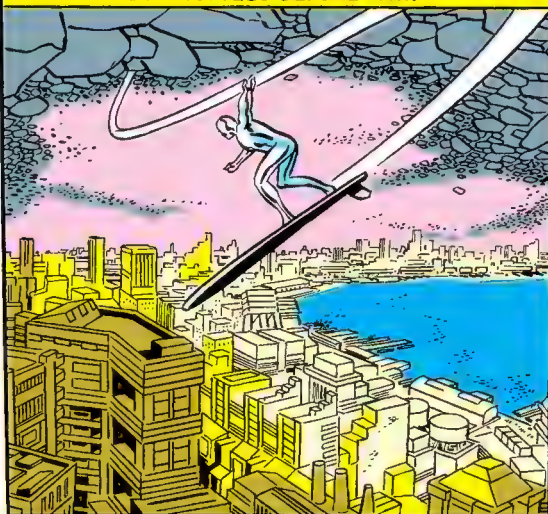
OUR MOMENT OF *CRISIS* IS NOW AT HAND!

*AS ALL TRUE MARVELITES KNOW, THE *WATCHER* IS A BEING FROM ANOTHER GALAXY, FROM A FAR OLDER CIVILIZATION, WHOSE MISSION IT IS TO WATCH AND TO RECORD THE HISTORY OF THE COSMOS! HE AND THE F.F. HAVE MET A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE PAST! -- STAN.

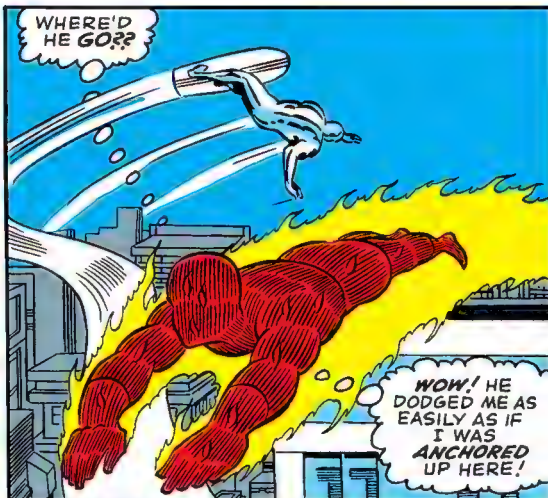
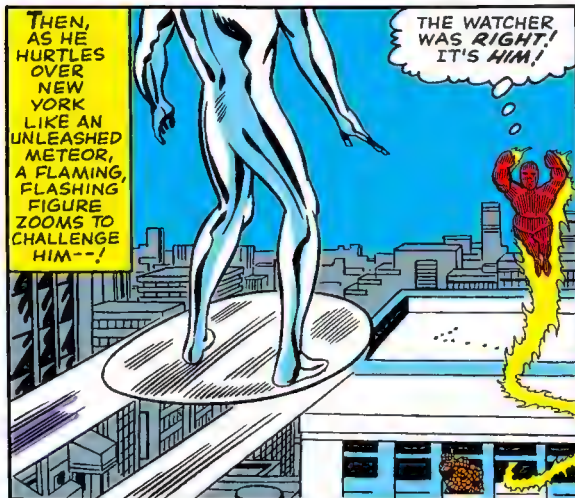
AND, THE **WATCHER'S** GRAVE CONCERN IS WELL-WARRANTED! FOR, AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT, THE **SILVER SURFER** PENETRATES THE ROCKY BARRIER AROUND EARTH WITH CONSUMMATE SKILL--!



...AS, SCANT SECONDS LATER, HE REALIZES THAT SOME **POWER** HAS ATTEMPTED TO **CONCEAL** THE CIVILIZATION--NAY, THE ENTIRE **PLANET**--THAT NOW LIES HELPLESS BEFORE HIM!



THEN, AS HE HURTLES OVER NEW YORK LIKE AN UNLEASHED METEOR, A FLAMING, FLASHING FIGURE ZOOMS TO CHALLENGE HIM--!

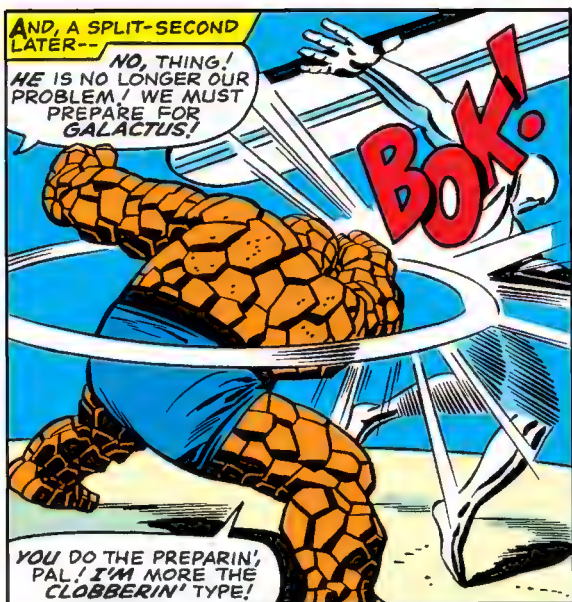


HE HAS LANDED! HE IS SIGNALING **GALACTUS**! WE HAVE FAILED! FAILED!

IT IS TOO LATE! THE DAMAGE IS DONE! WE MUST PLAN OUR DEFENSE!



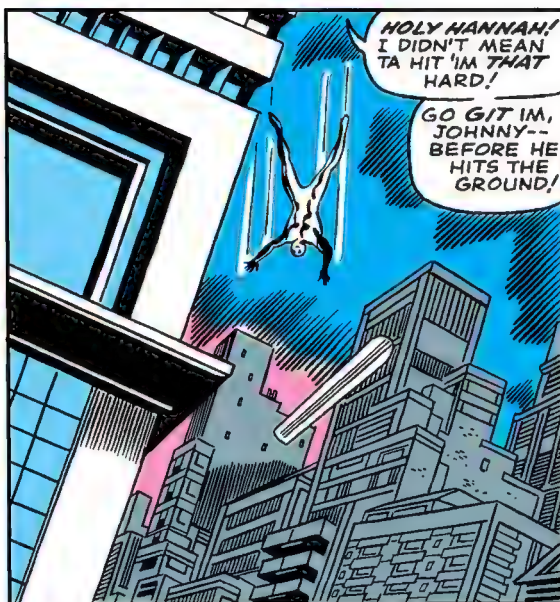
DISREGARDING THE HUMANS WITH UTTER AND COMPLETE DISDAIN, THE **SILVER SURFER** SEEMS TO GENERATE A SUDDEN BURST OF **ENERGY**, WHICH TRAVELS THRU **HYPER-SPACE INSTANTANEOUSLY!**



AND, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--

NO, THING!
HE IS NO LONGER OUR
PROBLEM! WE MUST
PREPARE FOR
GALACTUS!

YOU DO THE PREPARIN',
PAL! I'M MORE THE
CLOBBERIN' TYPE!



HOLY HANNAH!
I DIDN'T MEAN
TA HIT 'IM THAT
HARD!

GO GIT IM,
JOHNNY--
BEFORE HE
HITS THE
GROUND!



I'VE WARNED YOU A THOUSAND TIMES ABOUT
LEARNING TO CONTROL YOUR TEMPER, BEN!

DON'T WORRY, BIG BUDDY! I'LL
BE ABLE TO BREAK HIS FALL!

I DON'T GET IT! HE
BOUNCED BACK LIKE
HE WANTED TO FALL
OFF THE ROOF!

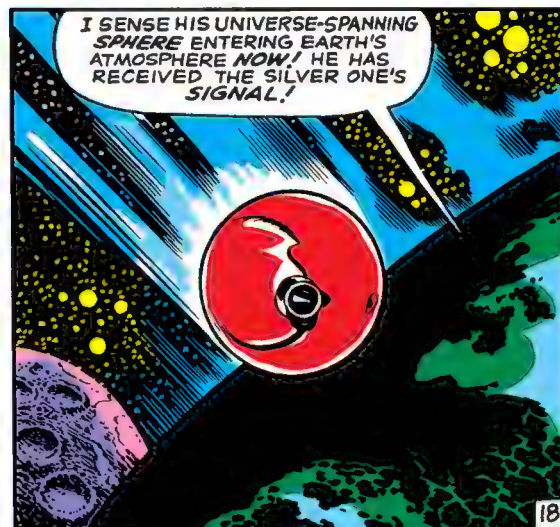


HE DID
WISH
TO!

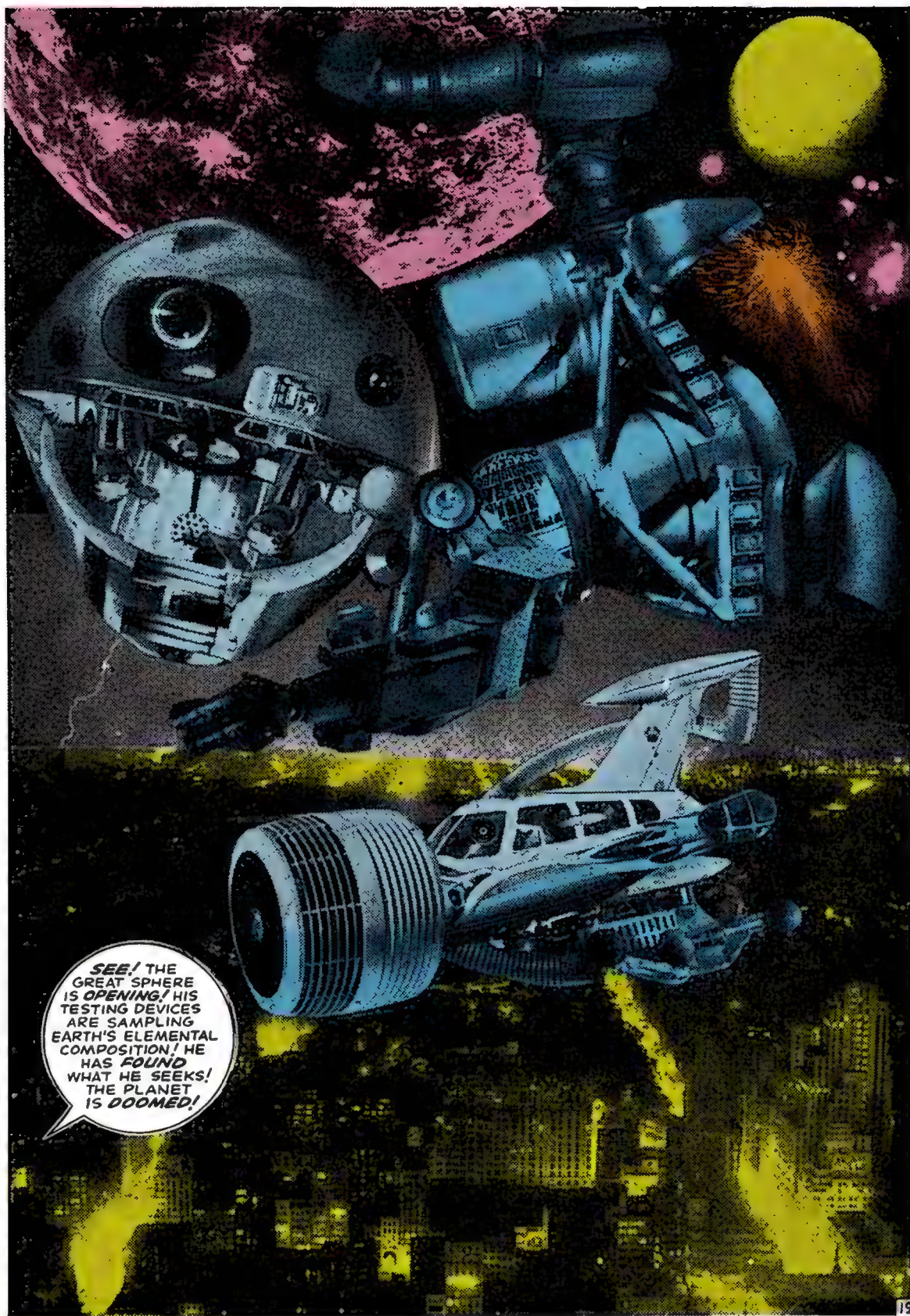
A MERE FALL CANNOT HURT THE
SILVER SURFER! IT WAS SIMPLY
THE EASIEST WAY FOR HIM TO
DEPART!



YOU MUST FORGET ABOUT HIM WHO RIDES
THE SKYWAYS! THE DANGER IS GALACTUS!
FOR HE IS THE ULTIMATE DANGER--PERHAPS
THE FINAL DANGER!



I SENSE HIS UNIVERSE-SPANNING
SPHERE ENTERING EARTH'S
ATMOSPHERE NOW! HE HAS
RECEIVED THE SILVER ONE'S
SIGNAL!





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Fantastic Four

"IF THIS BE
DOOMSDAY!"



THE FABULOUS F.F. FACE THE MOST POWERFUL FOE OF ALL!

"IF THIS BE DOOMSDAY!"

GALACTUS HAS LANDED ON EARTH! ANY ADDITIONAL WORDS OF OURS WOULD SIMPLY FALL BESIDE THE AWESOME PORTENT OF THAT ONE STAGGERING PHRASE! GALACTUS HAS LANDED ON EARTH... AND HUMANITY ITSELF TOTTERS ON THE BRINK OF ... DOOMSDAY!

GALACTUS HAS SEEN THE **WATCHER**! THEY'RE FACING EACH OTHER! **STAY BACK! ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!**

HE'S A **GIANT!** HE SEEMS TO BE **POWER PERSONIFIED!** REED... WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US??

THE **WATCHER** IS **SPEAKING** TO HIM! THEY...THEY ACT LIKE THEY **KNOW** EACH OTHER!

IF WE'RE GONNA HAVETA TACKLE **HIM**, THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO GIT INTO SOME **OTHER** KINDA BUSINESS!

IF YA ASK **ME**, THAT BOZO LOOKS LIKE HE COULD **PULVERIZE** THE **WATCHER** WITH HIS EYES SHUT!

WRITTEN IN THE MASTERFUL MANNER OF
STAN LEE!

ILLUSTRATED IN THE MAGNIFICENT MODE OF
JACK KIRBY!

INKED IN THE MAJESTIC MOOD OF
JOE SINNOTT!

LETTERED IN THE NICK OF TIME BY
S.ROSEN

AND THEN, GALACTUS SPEAKS---

SO! 'T WAS YOU WHO CONSPIRED TO HIDE THIS PALTRY WORLD FROM THE EYES OF GALACTUS! KNOW YOU NOT THAT NONE MAY THWART MY WILL ??

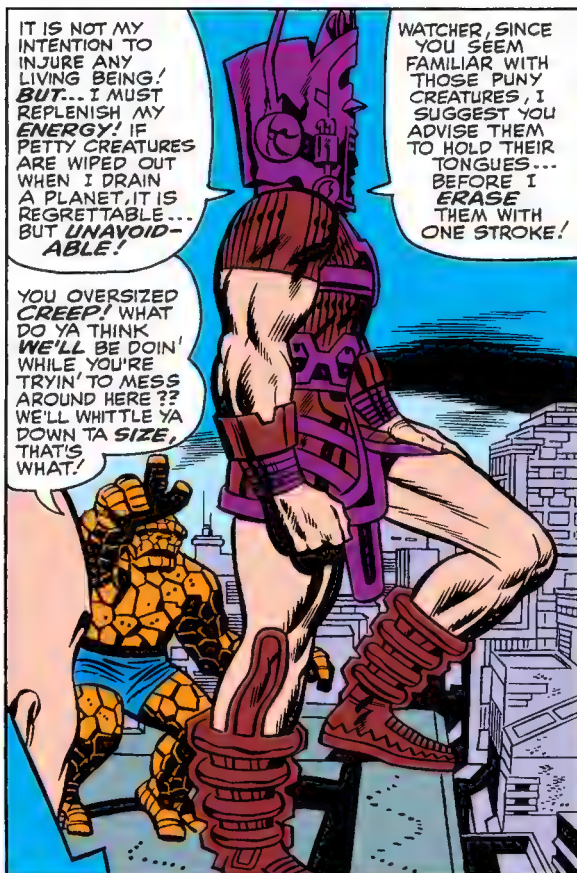
HEED MY WORDS, PILLAGER OF THE PLANETS! THIS TINY SPECK OF MATTER UPON WHICH WE STAND CONTAINS INTELLIGENT LIFE! YOU MUST NOT DESTROY IT!

OF WHAT IMPORT ARE BRIEF, NAME-LESS LIVES... TO GALACTUS??

BIG AS HE IS... NO SWELL-HEADED CLOWN IS GONNA TALK ABOUT US THAT AWAY!

CAN IT REALLY BE ?? DOES HE ACTUALLY MEAN TO ATTACK THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE ??

SEE HOW HE IGNORES US... AS THOUGH WE'RE OF NO CONSEQUENCE!



IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO INJURE ANY LIVING BEING! **BUT...** I MUST REPLENISH MY **ENERGY!** IF PETTY CREATURES ARE WIPED OUT WHEN I DRAIN A PLANET, IT IS REGRETTABLE... BUT **UNAVOIDABLE!**

YOU OVERSIZED **CREEP!** WHAT DO YA THINK **WE'LL** BE DOIN' WHILE YOU'RE TRYIN' TO MESS AROUND HERE ?? WE'LL WHITTLE YA DOWN TA **SIZE,** THAT'S WHAT!

WATCHER, SINCE YOU SEEM FAMILIAR WITH THOSE PUNY CREATURES, I SUGGEST YOU ADVISE THEM TO HOLD THEIR TONGUES... BEFORE I **ERASE** THEM WITH ONE STROKE!



TAKE **WARNING, GALACTUS!** THEY ARE LESS PUNY THAN YOU THINK! AND THE **WATCHER** STANDS BESIDE THEM IN THIS FATEFUL HOUR!

THEN YOU WOULD VIOLATE YOUR PLEDGE NEVER TO

INTERFERE IN COSMIC AFFAIRS? SO BE IT! DESPITE YOUR POWER... WHICH I KNOW FULL WELL... IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN... I AM **SUPREME** UNTO MYSELF... I AM **GALACTUS!**

THIS PLANET CONTAINS THE ENERGY I NEED TO SUSTAIN ME! I SHALL **ABSORB** IT AT WILL... AS I HAVE DONE FOR AGES, IN COUNTLESS GALAXIES THRUOUT THE COSMOS!

BUT THE **OTHERS** WERE DEAD WORLDS... NO **HARM** WAS DONE! THERE ARE **BILLIONS** OF LIVING BEINGS ON EARTH!

THAT CAN BE OF NO CONCERN... TO **GALACTUS!**

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, BIG MOUTH. WE'LL **MAKE** IT YER CONCERN!



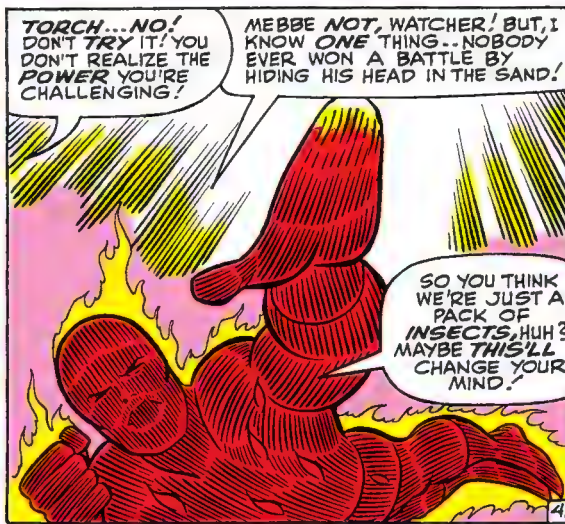
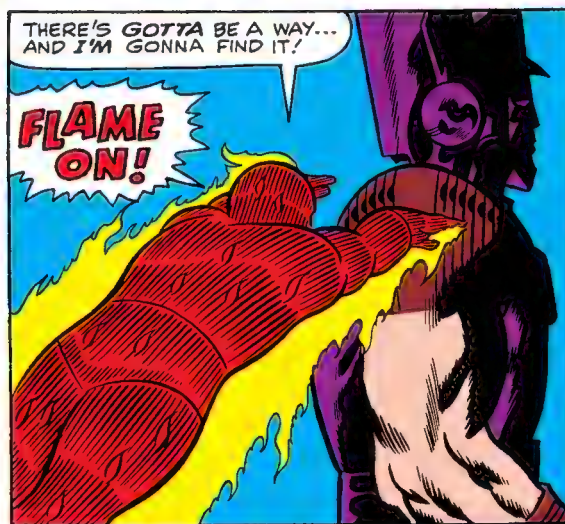
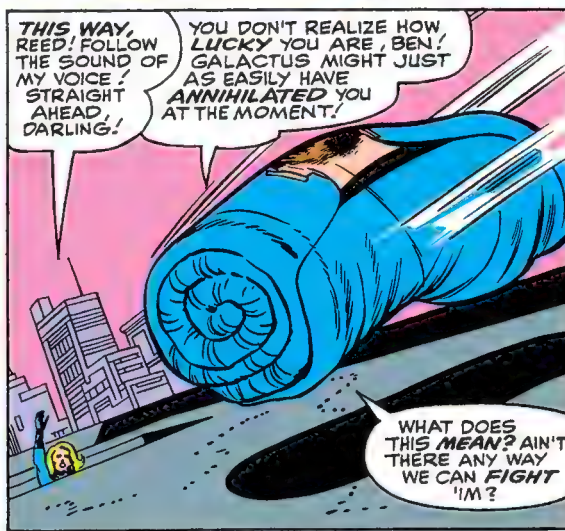
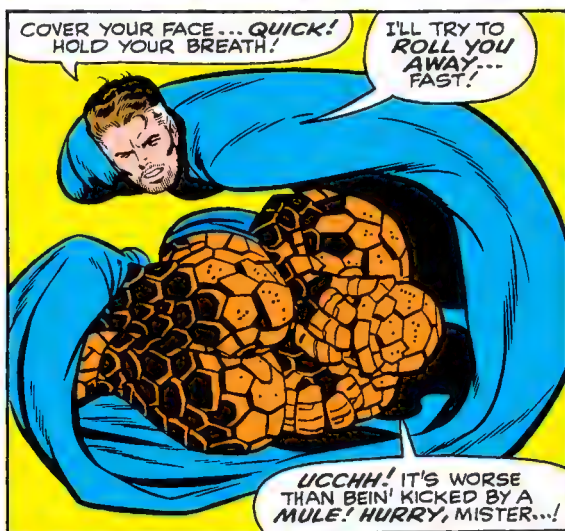
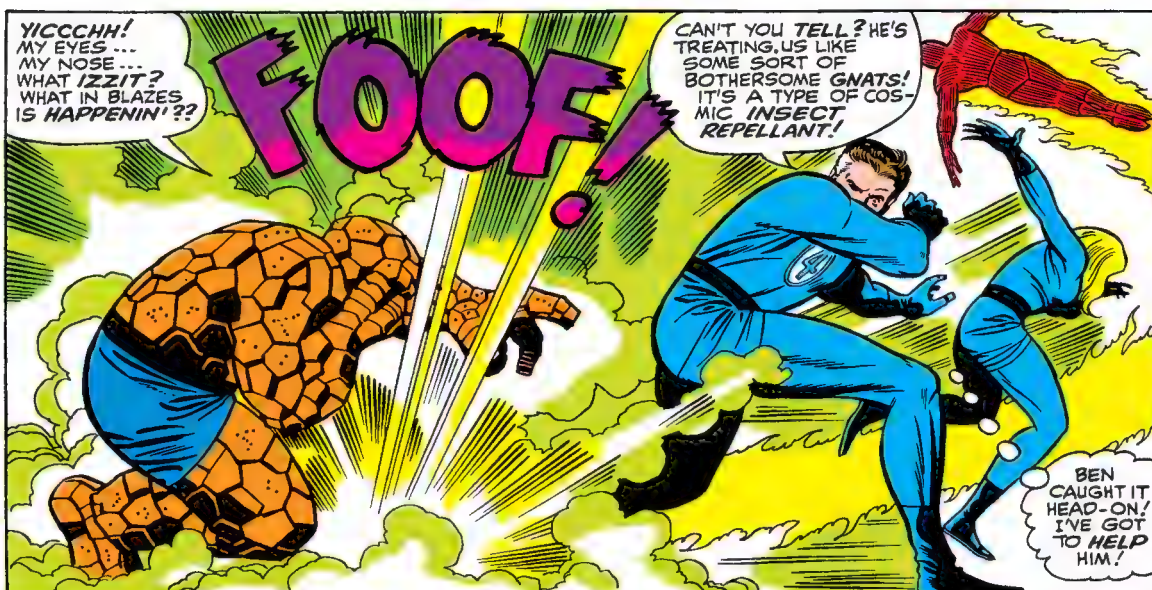
IT'S **CLOBBERIN' TIME!**



HE DIDN'T EVEN **FEEL** IT! MY EXTRA-SPECIAL **SUNDAY-PUNCH...** AND IT WAS LIKE **NOTHIN'VILLE!**

NOW WHAT? HE DROPPED SOME KINDA NUTTY **CAPSULE** IN FRONT O' ME!

BEN! LOOK OUT! RUN... RUN!

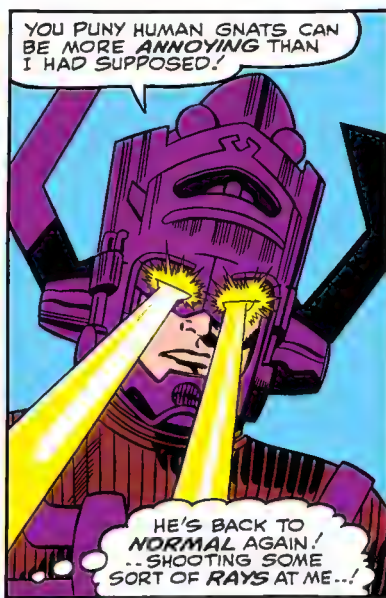




HOLY HANNAH! HE'S JUST STANDING THERE... ABSORBING THE FLAMES LIKE THEY'RE NOTHING!

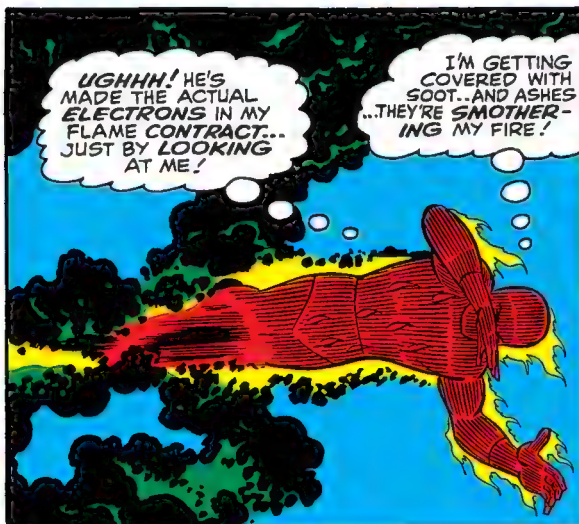


NOW HIS WHOLE BODY IS FLARING UP... LIKE THE HEART OF A BLAZING SUN!



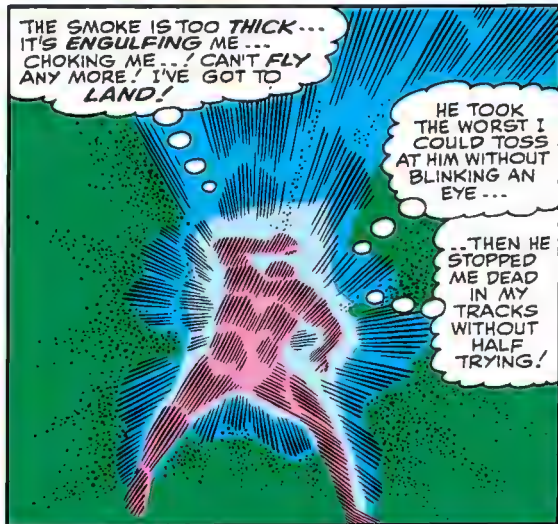
YOU PUNY HUMAN GNATS CAN BE MORE ANNOYING THAN I HAD SUPPOSED!

HE'S BACK TO NORMAL AGAIN! ...SHOOTING SOME SORT OF RAYS AT ME...!



UGHHH! HE'S MADE THE ACTUAL ELECTRONS IN MY FLAME CONTRACT... JUST BY LOOKING AT ME!

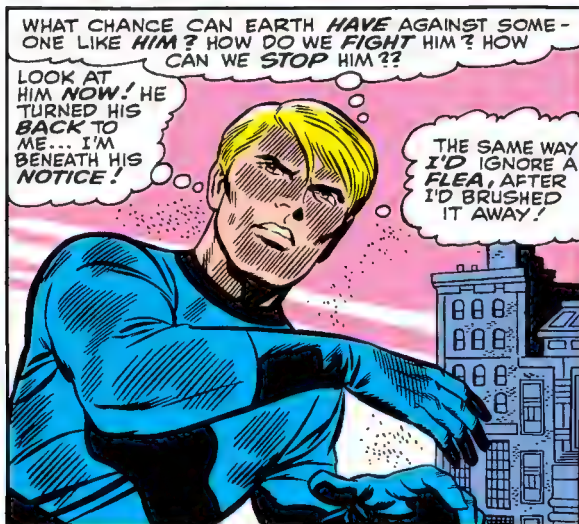
I'M GETTING COVERED WITH SOOT... AND ASHES... THEY'RE SMOTHERING MY FIRE!



THE SMOKE IS TOO THICK... IT'S ENGULFING ME... CHOKING ME... CAN'T FLY ANY MORE! I'VE GOT TO LAND!

HE TOOK THE WORST I COULD TOSS AT HIM WITHOUT BLINKING AN EYE...

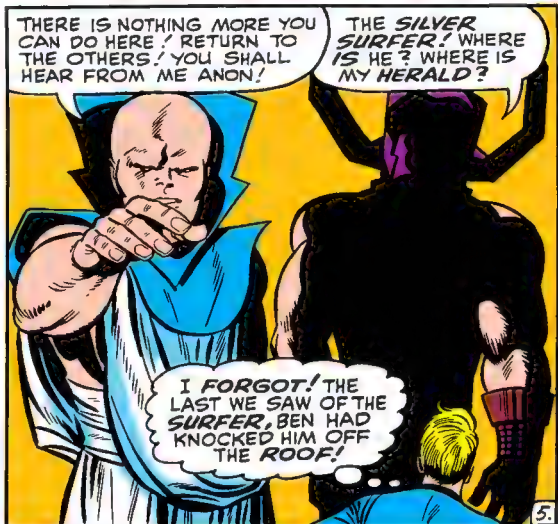
...THEN HE STOPPED ME DEAD IN MY TRACKS WITHOUT HALF TRYING!



WHAT CHANCE CAN EARTH HAVE AGAINST SOMEONE LIKE HIM? HOW DO WE FIGHT HIM? HOW CAN WE STOP HIM??

LOOK AT HIM NOW! HE TURNED HIS BACK TO ME... I'M BENEATH HIS NOTICE!

THE SAME WAY I'D IGNORE A FLEA, AFTER I'D BRUSHED IT AWAY!



THERE IS NOTHING MORE YOU CAN DO HERE! RETURN TO THE OTHERS! YOU SHALL HEAR FROM ME ANON!

THE SILVER SURFER! WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS MY HERALD?

I FORGOT! THE LAST WE SAW OF THE SURFER, BEN HAD KNOCKED HIM OFF THE ROOF!

SECONDS LATER...

JOHNNY! LOOK AT YOU! WHAT HAPPENED THERE... ON THE ROOF?

I JUST REALIZED HOW A MOSQUITO MUST FEEL WHEN SOMEONE SWATS IT! GALACTUS MADE A MONKEY OUT OF ME!

WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING! WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE IT ALL TO THE WATCHER! EVEN HE'S NO MATCH FOR THAT TWO-LEGGED NIGHTMARE UP THERE!

REED WANTS US TO WAIT, JOHNNY! HE SAYS WE MUST BIDE OUR TIME... UNTIL WE CAN DECIDE WHAT MUST BE DONE!

IN THE MEANTIME, WHY DON'T YOU GET CLEANED UP?

WHAT'S WITH YOU GUYS?? GALACTUS IS PLANNING TO TEAR OUR PLANET APART, AND YOU'RE MAKIN' LIKE A TV SHAVING COMMERCIAL!!!

RELAX, JOHNNY! WE BEEN TRYIN' TO COOK UP A PLAN!

NO HARM IN TIDYING UP WHILE WE'RE THINKING, IS THERE, LAD? YOU COULD USE A SHOWER YOURSELF!

NUTS! YOU'RE JUST GIVING UP, THAT'S ALL! ADMIT IT!

IF ANYONE ELSE SAID THAT TO ME, I'D FLATTEN 'IM, KID!

WE ALL WENT OFF HALF-CKOCKED, JOHNNY... AND LOOK WHERE IT GOT US! NOW STOP THINKING WITH YOUR MOUTH AND SETTLE DOWN, BOY!

ANYWAY, WE GOT SOME LICKS IN! I BELTED THAT SILVER SURFER CLEAR ACROSS TOWN!

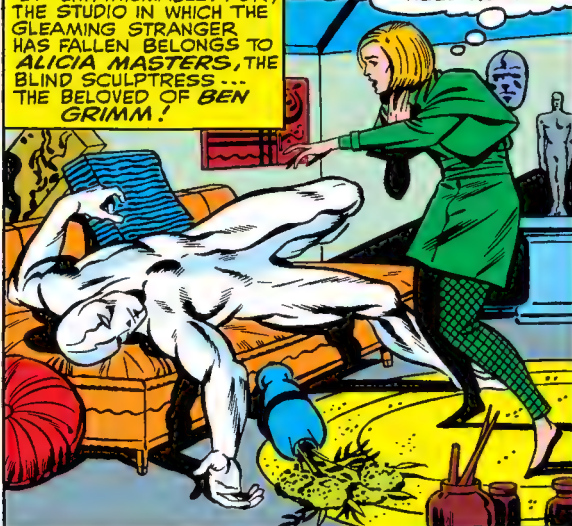
AND, EVEN AS BEN SPEAKS, THE STRANGE COSMIC CREATURE SLOWLY BEGINS TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS... FOR, ALTHOUGH THE SUDDEN IMPACT HAD SHOCKED HIM INTO INSENSIBILITY, A BEING WHO STRADDLES THE STARWAYS... WHO SURES THROUGH THE STORMS OF SPACE... CAN HARDLY BE INJURED BY A SINGLE BLOW... NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL IT MAY HAVE BEEN...

KLACK!

SOMETHING HAS FALLEN THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT BEHIND ME! WHAT CAN IT BE?

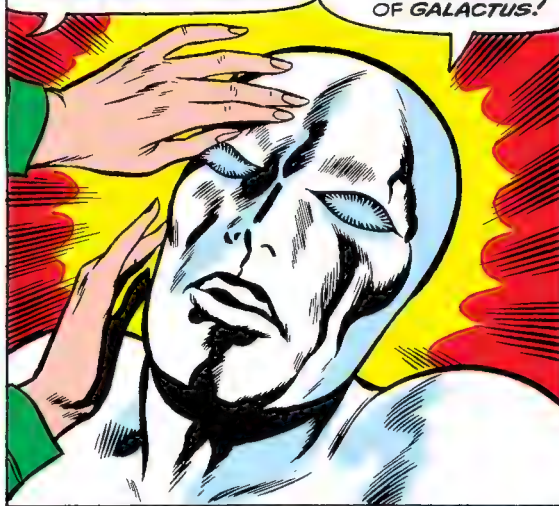
TRULY, THE WORKINGS OF FATE ARE STRANGELY UNFATHOMABLE! FOR, THE STUDIO IN WHICH THE GLEAMING STRANGER HAS FALLEN BELONGS TO ALICIA MASTERS, THE BLIND SCULPTRESS... THE BELOVED OF BEN GRIMM!

A VOICE SOFTLY MOANING! WHOEVER IT IS... MUST NEED HELP!



THE FACE OF A MAN! YET... DIFFERENT... FAR DIFFERENT FROM ANY I HAVE EVER FELT BEFORE!

MAN? I AM MORE THAN MAN! I AM THE SILVER SURFER! I AM THE HERALD OF GALACTUS!



SILVER SURFER? GALACTUS? I... I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND...!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER? UNDERSTANDING CANNOT ALTER THE WAYS OF DESTINY!

I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE SPEAK SO... SO STRANGELY! AND YET, THERE IS A CERTAIN NOBILITY IN YOUR VOICE!



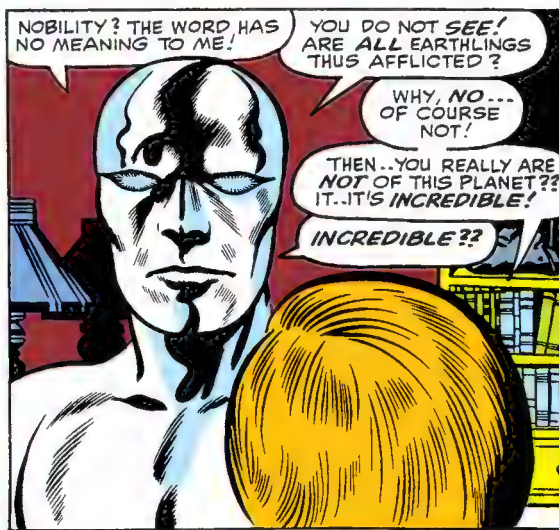
NOBILITY? THE WORD HAS NO MEANING TO ME!

YOU DO NOT SEE! ARE ALL EARTHLINGS THUS AFFLICTED?

WHY, NO... OF COURSE NOT!

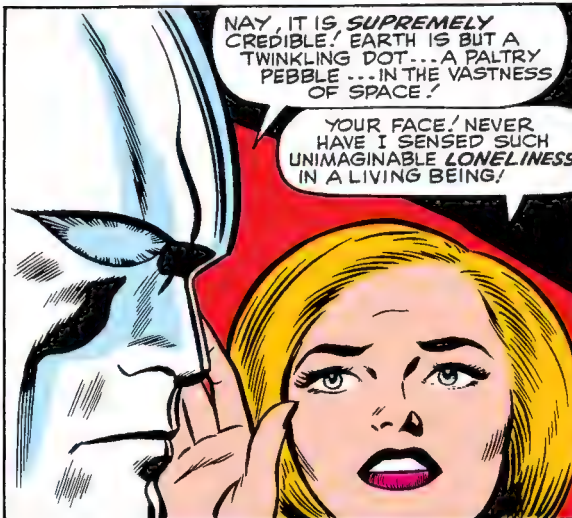
THEN... YOU REALLY ARE NOT OF THIS PLANET?? IT... IT'S INCREDIBLE!

INCREDIBLE??



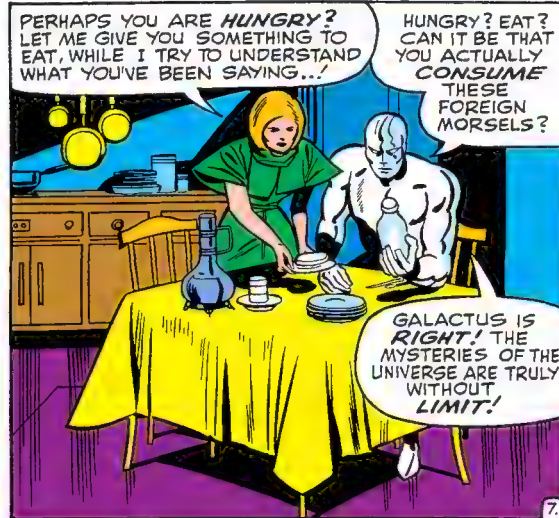
NAY, IT IS SUPREMELY CREDIBLE! EARTH IS BUT A TWINKLING DOT... A PALTRY PEBBLE... IN THE VASTNESS OF SPACE!

YOUR FACE! NEVER HAVE I SENSED SUCH UNIMAGINABLE LONELINESS IN A LIVING BEING!



PERHAPS YOU ARE HUNGRY? LET ME GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO EAT, WHILE I TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING...

HUNGRY? EAT? CAN IT BE THAT YOU ACTUALLY CONSUME THESE FOREIGN MORSELS?

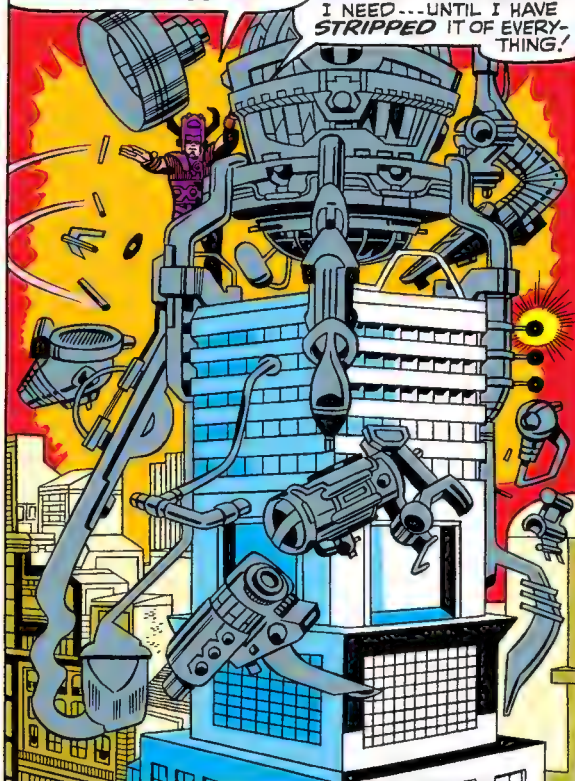


GALACTUS IS RIGHT! THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE ARE TRULY WITHOUT LIMIT!

BUT, WHAT OF **GALACTUS** HIMSELF? ATOP THE TOWERING BAXTER BUILDING, HE ASSEMBLES THE MANY VARIED OBJECTS WHICH DRIFT DOWN FROM HIS ORBITING SPACE CRAFT...

SOON MY PREPARATIONS WILL BE **COMPLETED**...

AND THEN, THIS PLANET WILL FURNISH ME WITH ALL THE **ENERGY** I NEED...UNTIL I HAVE **STRIPPED** IT OF EVERYTHING!

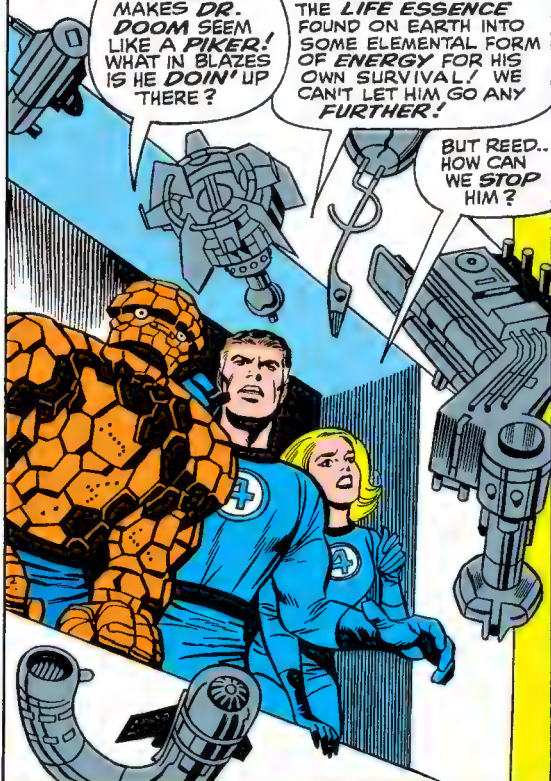


THEN, ALL THAT WILL REMAIN SHALL BE FOR ME TO SEARCH THE COSMOS ONCE MORE, UNTIL I HAVE FOUND **ANOTHER** SUCH PLANET...AS I HAVE DONE FOR ALL THESE AGES!

THAT GUY MAKES **DR. DOOM** SEEM LIKE A **PIKER**! WHAT IN BLAZES IS HE **DOIN'** UP THERE?

PREPARING TO CONVERT THE **LIFE ESSENCE** FOUND ON EARTH INTO SOME ELEMENTAL FORM OF **ENERGY** FOR HIS OWN SURVIVAL! WE CAN'T LET HIM GO ANY **FURTHER**!

BUT REED.. HOW CAN WE **STOP** HIM?



THE STREET'S ALL ROPED OFF DOWN BELOW. EVEN THE **COPS** DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT! IT'S UP TO **US**, KIDDIES!

YOU'RE **RIGHT**! STAY HERE, SUE! BEN AND I WILL TACKLE HIM **FIRST**! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

NO! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME **BEHIND**!



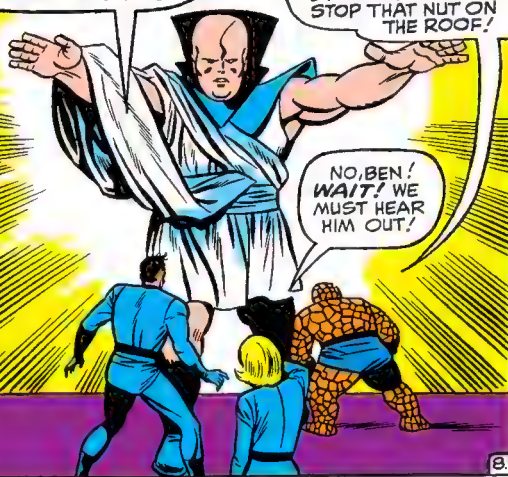
IT'S AN **ORDER, LADY**! IN CASE WE DON'T **MAKE IT**... IT'LL BE UP TO YOU AND **JOHNNY**!

HOWEVER, BEFORE THE DETERMINED, DEDICATED TRIO CAN REACH THEIR OBJECTIVE, THEY ARE BLOCKED BY THE AWESOME, IMPOSING FIGURE OF... THE **WATCHER**!

WAIT! YOU MUST **RECONSIDER**! YOUR STRENGTH IS NOT YET THE EQUAL OF YOUR **COURAGE**! BEFORE YOU PRESS BLINDLY FORWARD, YOU MUST HEAR THE WORDS I SPEAK...

BUT THERE'S NO MORE **TIME** FOR SPEAKING! **GALACTUS** MUST BE **STOPPED**... AND IT MUST BE **NOW**!

YOU'RE PRETTY **BIG** IN THE TALKIN' DEPARTMENT... BUT NO CORNBALL **SPEECH** IS GONNA STOP THAT NUT ON THE ROOF!

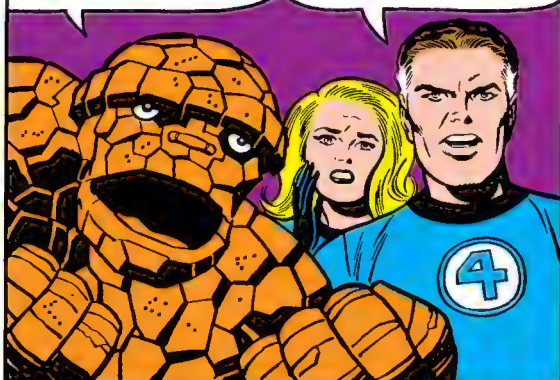


NO, BEN! **WAIT!** WE MUST HEAR HIM OUT!

YOU HEAR 'IM OUT, SISTER! THAT FOG-HORNED FINK HAS BEEN TREATIN' US LIKE A BUNCH A INSECTS SINCE HE LANDED...AND I HAD IT...RIGHT UP TO MY BABY-BLUE PEEPER!

ANOTHER FEW SECONDS WON'T MATTER, BEN!

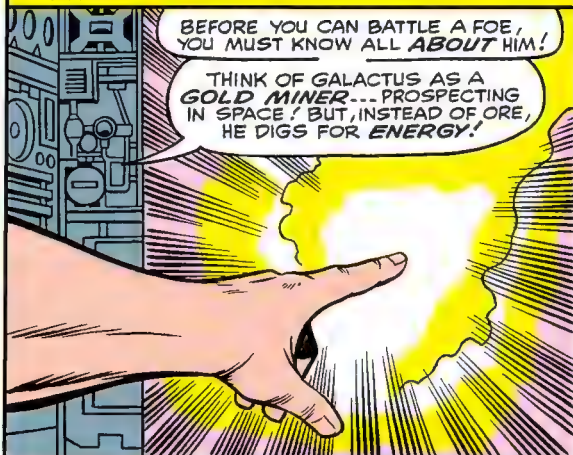
WHAT IS IT, WATCHER? WHAT MORE CAN THERE BE FOR US TO DISCUSS?



WITH AN EFFORTLESS WAVE OF HIS HAND, THE SOMBER, TOWERING FIGURE CAUSES A SCREEN OF LIGHT TO APPEAR ON THE WALL...AND THEN...

BEFORE YOU CAN BATTLE A FOE, YOU MUST KNOW ALL ABOUT HIM!

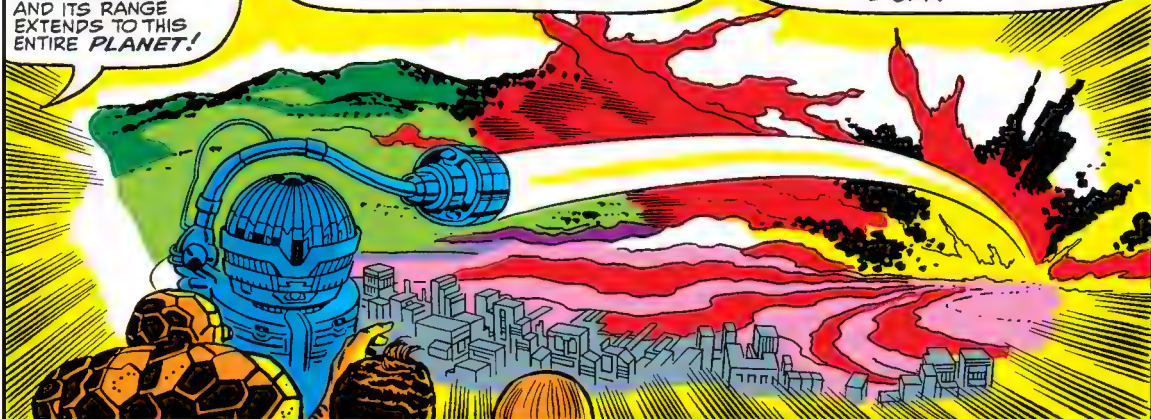
THINK OF GALACTUS AS A GOLD MINER...PROSPECTING IN SPACE! BUT, INSTEAD OF ORE, HE DIGS FOR ENERGY!



THE DEVICE HE IS CONSTRUCTING ON THE ROOF ABOVE IS AN ELEMENTAL CONVERTER...AND ITS RANGE EXTENDS TO THIS ENTIRE PLANET!

IT HAS ONE PURPOSE...AND ONE ALONE! IT IS CREATED TO CONVERT THE OCEANS OF EARTH INTO PURE ENERGY...ENERGY WHICH GALACTUS CAN HOARD FOR HIMSELF!

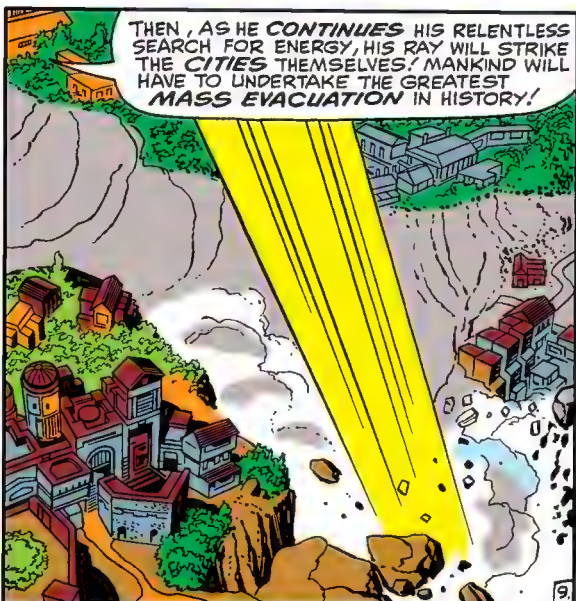
KEEP YOUR EYES UPON THE TRANSI-SCREEN WHICH I HAVE MATERIALIZED IN FRONT OF YOU...IT WILL REVEAL VISUAL IMAGES OF ALL THAT I SAY!

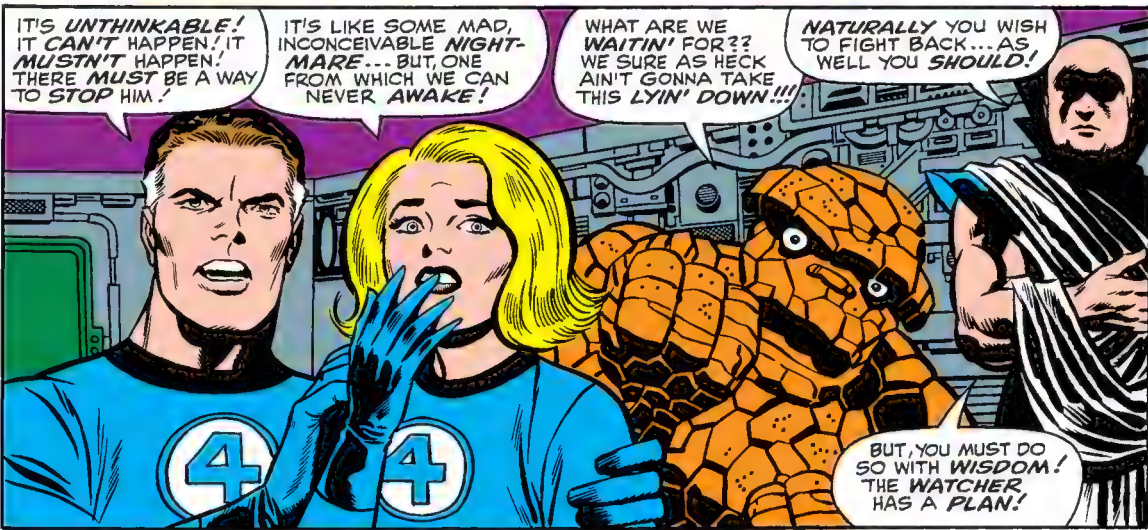
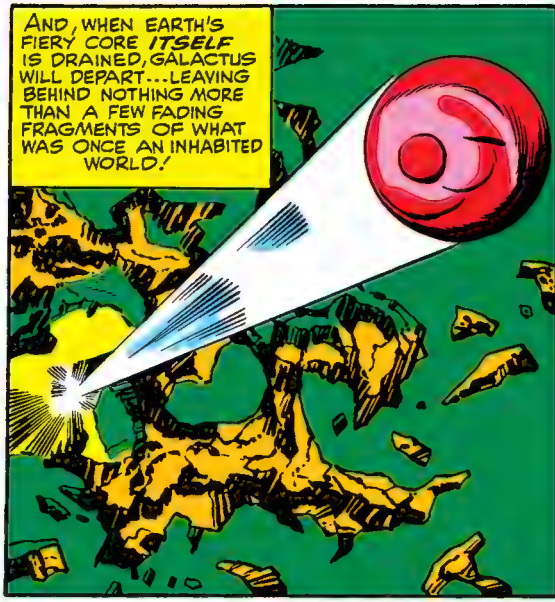
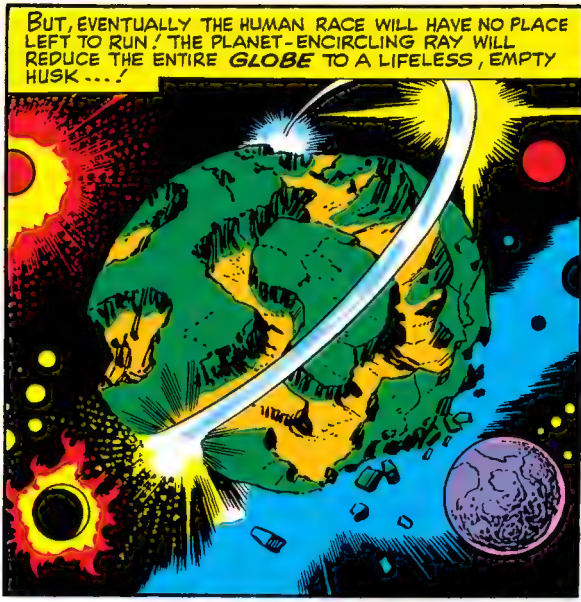


WITHIN A MATTER OF MINUTES, GALACTUS' ELEMENTAL CONVERTER WILL HAVE DEHYDRATED EVERY SEA...DRIED OUT EVERY BODY OF WATER KNOWN TO MAN!



THEN, AS HE CONTINUES HIS RELENTLESS SEARCH FOR ENERGY, HIS RAY WILL STRIKE THE CITIES THEMSELVES! MANKIND WILL HAVE TO UNDERTAKE THE GREATEST MASS EVACUATION IN HISTORY!





AND, AT THAT MOMENT... IN THE APARTMENT OF ALICIA MASTERS...

THE PROCESS YOU TERM **EATING** IS FAR TOO WASTEFUL!

HOW MUCH SIMPLER IT IS TO CONVERT ALL THOSE ITEMS INTO PURE **ENERGY!** FOR ENERGY ALONE IS... **POWER!**

A SINGLE MANNER, NOT BE WASTED!

IN THIS MANNER, NOT BE WASTED!

THAT SUDDEN HEAT I FEEL! WHAT CAN HE BE DOING?

AND THE OBJECTS IN THIS ROOM... PICTURES, BITS OF SCULPTURE... DECORATIONS... THEY ARE **ALL WASTEFUL!**

BEFORE THE GREAT **GALACTUS** IS DONE, **EVERYTHING** SHALL BE REDUCED TO SHEER **ENERGY!**

YOU... YOU... YOU... **MEAN IT!** IN SOME MAD UN-BELIEVABLE, NIGHTMARISH WAY... YOU **MEAN IT!** YOU INTEND TO **DESTROY THE EARTH!**

DESTROY IS MERELY A WORD! WE SIMPLY **CHANGE** THINGS. WE CHANGE ELEMENTS INTO **ENERGY**... THE ENERGY WHICH SUSTAINS **GALACTUS!** FOR, IT IS ONLY **HE** THAT MATTERS!

NO! NO! WE ALL MATTER! EVERY LIVING BEING... EVERY BIRD AND BEAST... THIS IS **OUR** WORLD! **OURS!**

PERHAPS WE ARE NOT AS POWERFUL AS YOUR **GALACTUS**... BUT WE HAVE **HEARTS**... WE HAVE **SOULS**... WE LIVE... BREATHE... **FEEL!** CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?? ARE YOU AS BLIND AS I??

AUTOMATICALLY, THE GLISTENING HAND OF THE SILVER SURFER RAISES TOWARDS THE SHOUTING GIRL... AS IF TO **SILENCE** HER FOREVER WITH A GESTURE! BUT THEN... HE PAUSES...

NEVER HAVE I HEARD SUCH WORDS... SENSED SUCH COURAGE...

...OR KNOWN THIS STRANGE FEELING... THIS NEW EMOTION...!

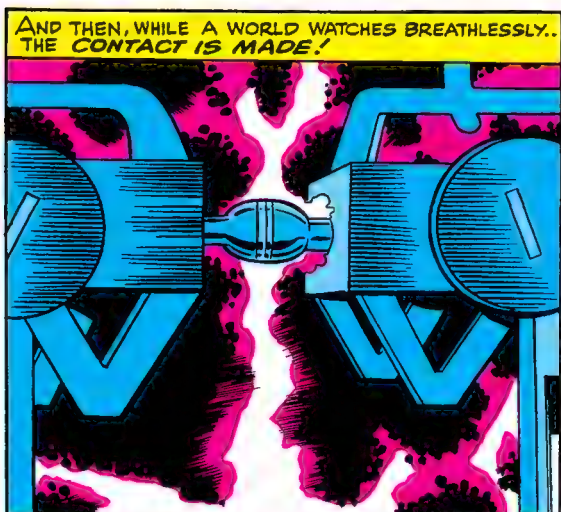
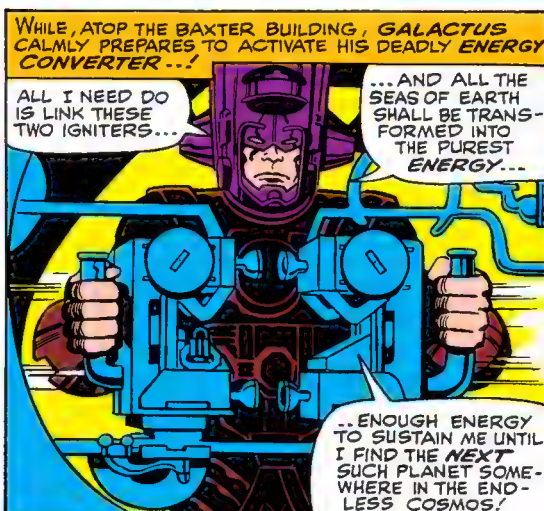
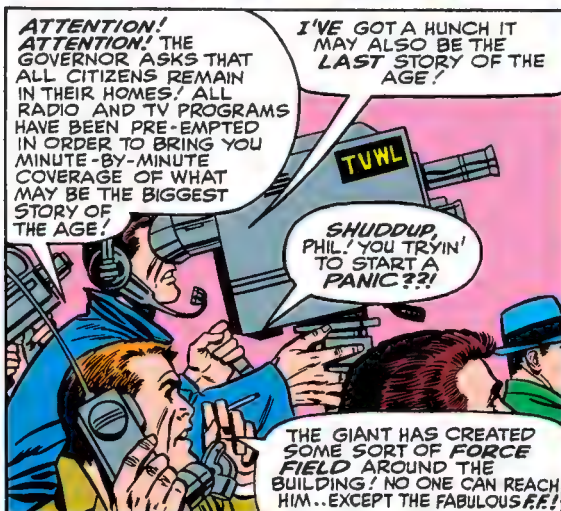
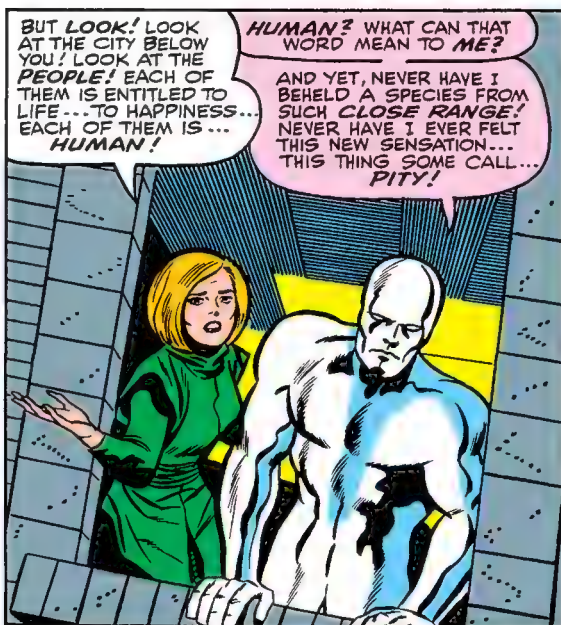
THERE IS A WORD SOME RACES USE... A WORD I HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD... UNTIL NOW!

AT LAST I KNOW... **BEAUTY!**

THEN YOU ARE **NOT** JUST A SOUL-LESS MONSTER! YOU **TOO** HAVE EMOTIONS! I **KNEW** IT! I **FELT** IT FROM THE FIRST!

NO! SAY NO MORE! DO NOT BUILD UP YOUR HOPES! I AM WHAT I **MUST** BE!

I SERVE GALACTUS!



WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING BELLOW OF MONUMENTAL RAGE, THE ULTIMATE VILLAIN TURNS TOWARDS THE DEADLY CONVERTER, ONLY TO FIND...

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME NOW, THIS IS ONE BLASTED MACHINE THAT NOBODY'S EVER GONNA HAVETA WORRY ABOUT NO MORE!

KKRRRAA!

ONE OF THE EARTH CREATURES... DESTROYING MY CONVERTER! FOOL! I CAN CREATE ANOTHER IN MERE MINUTES!

CREATE ALL YA WANT TO, MISTER! AND I'LL CLOBBER 'EM AS FAST AS YA MAKE 'EM!

AN! TO SHOW YA I AIN'T JUST WHISTLIN' DIXIE, HERE'S MUD IN YER EYE, YA CREEPY, KING-SIZED CRUM-BUM!

BRAN!

GREAT WORK, BEN! YOU TOOK HIM BY SURPRISE... KNOCKED HIM CLEAN OVER THE LEDGE! NOW IT'S MY TURN! WE'VE GOT TO SHOW HIM WE'RE CAPABLE OF PUTTING UP A FIGHT... SOMEHOW!

BE MY GUEST, STRETCH! YA PAYS YER MONEY AND YA TAKES YER WHACK AT 'IM!

I'LL ROLL MYSELF INTO A CANNONBALL SHAPE! THROW ME, BEN... HURRY!

BULLS EYE! BUT... I DIDN'T HIT HIM HARD ENOUGH! WE'VE GOT TO KNOCK HIM INTO THE RIVER! HE MUSTN'T LAND ON THE STREET BELOW... WITH ALL THE CROWDS THERE!

WOK!



YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT *THAT*, DARLING! LOOK! HE *ISN'T* FALLING! THE PEOPLE DOWN BELOW ARE SAFE!

HE ISN'T FALLING..?

I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED!* WITH ALL THE VAST, INCALCULABLE AMOUNTS OF *ENERGY* HE POSSESSES, IT'S ONLY NATURAL...



... ONLY NATURAL FOR HIM TO CONTROL SOME SORT OF BUILT-IN *ANTI-GRAVITY* DEVICE!

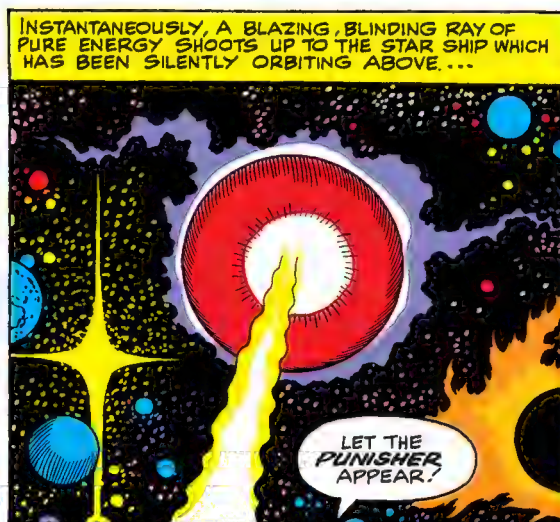
I HAVE ENDURED *ENOUGH* ANNOYANCE FROM YOU PUNY SPACE INSECTS!



THE TIME HAS COME TO *RID* MYSELF OF SUCH PETTY NUISANCES!

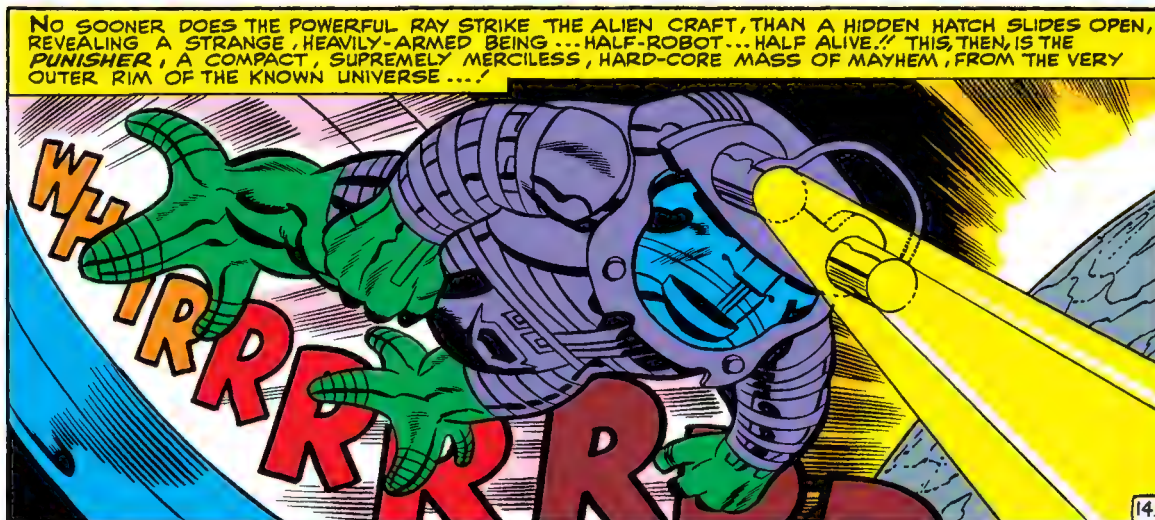
I CAN TOLERATE NO FURTHER DELAYS, FOR I HAVE A COSMIC *TIME TABLE* TO OBSERVE!

THEREFORE, I SHALL SUMMON ONE WHO WILL KEEP THE IRRITATING MITES AT BAY WHILE I COMPLETE MY TASK! IT IS THE TIME FOR THE *SIGNAL--!*

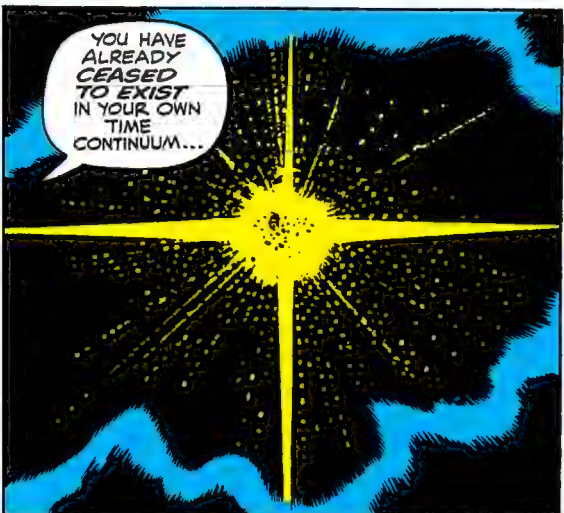
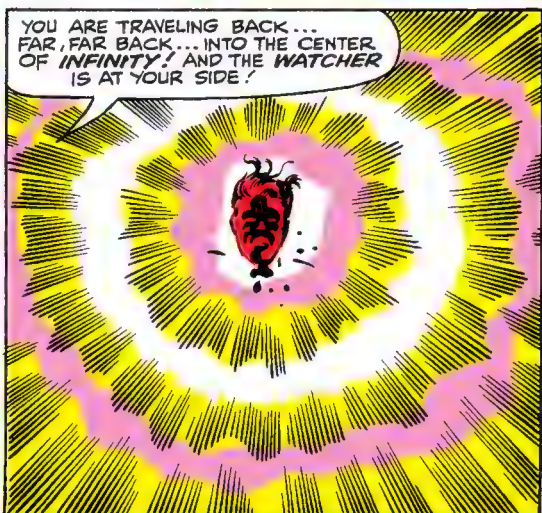
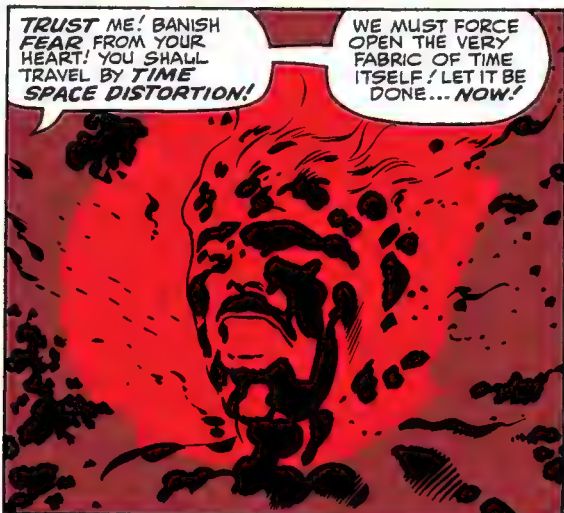
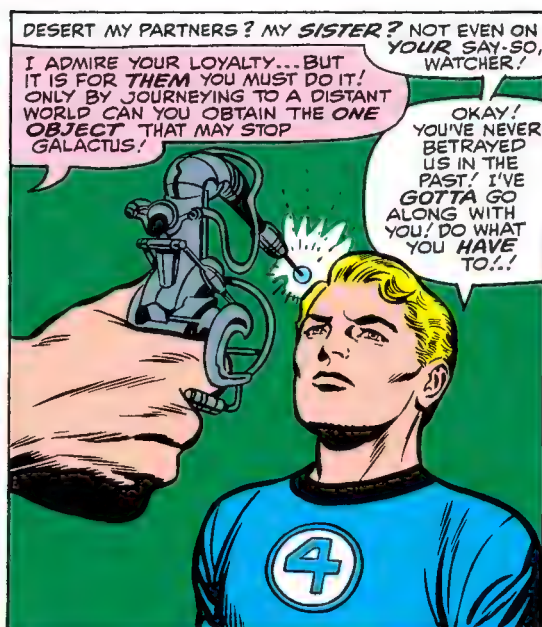
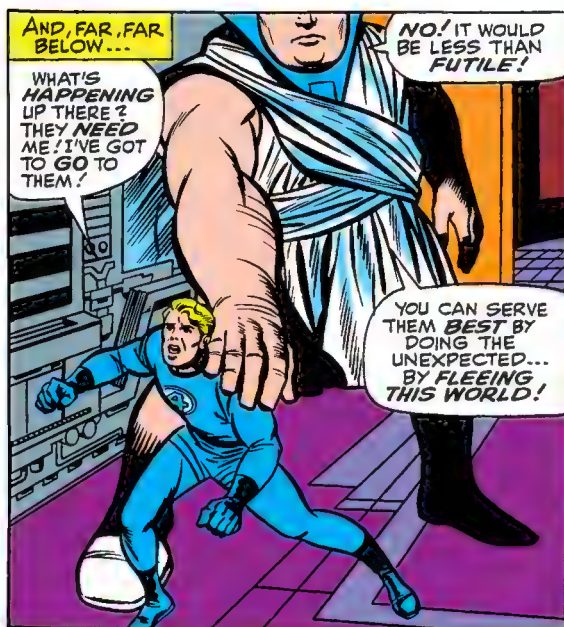


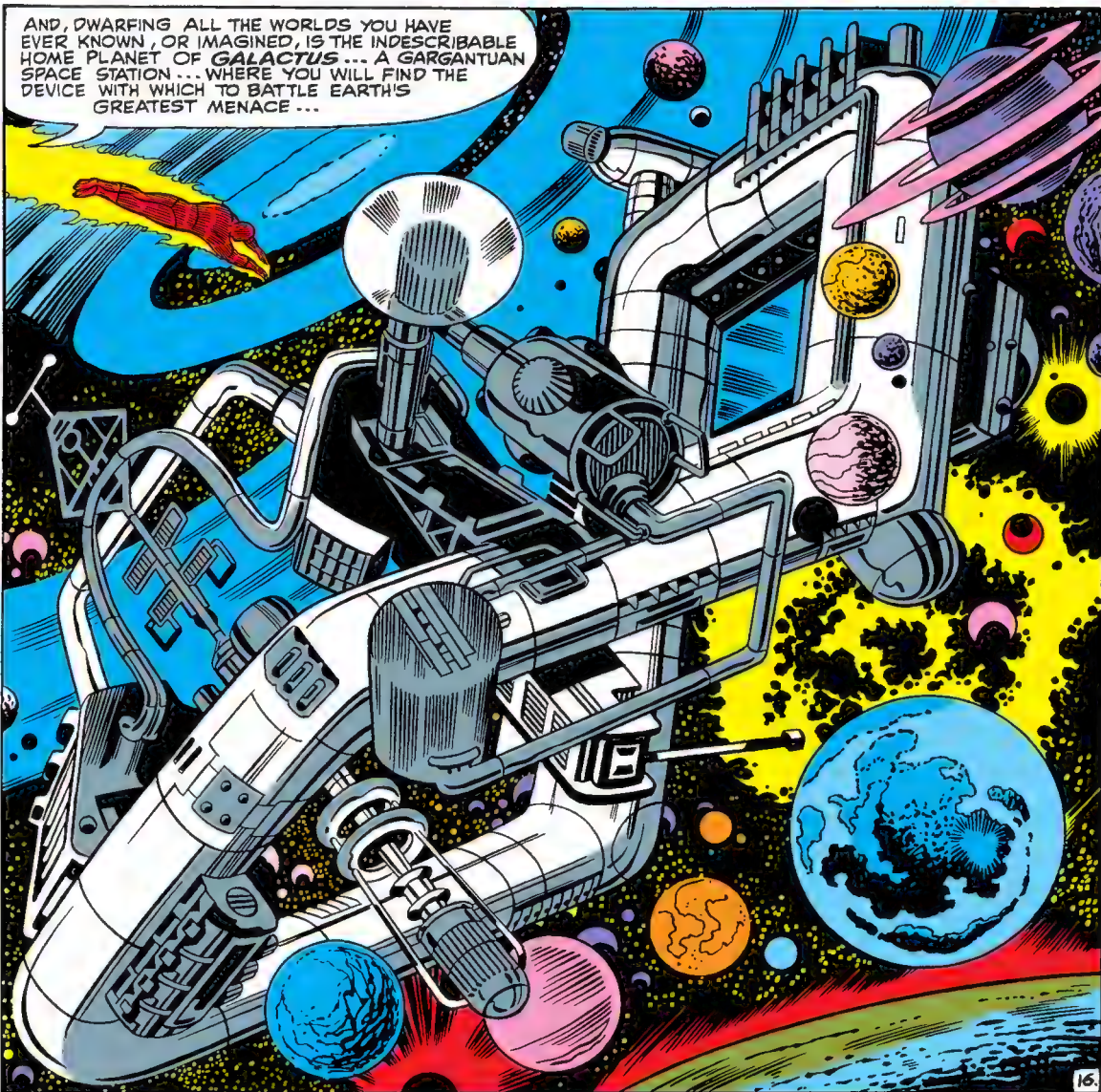
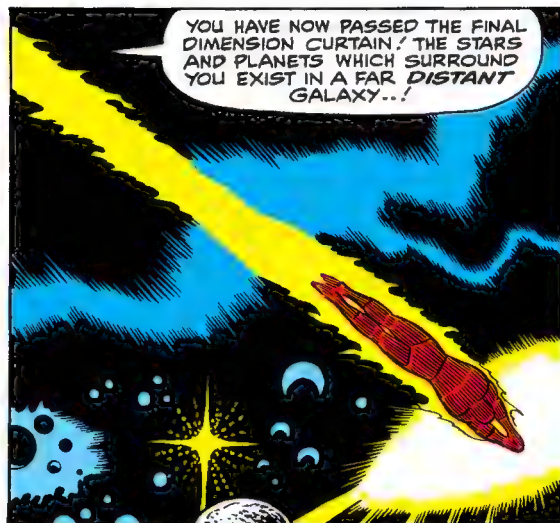
INSTANTANEOUSLY, A BLAZING, BLINDING RAY OF PURE ENERGY SHOOTS UP TO THE STAR SHIP WHICH HAS BEEN SILENTLY ORBITING ABOVE...

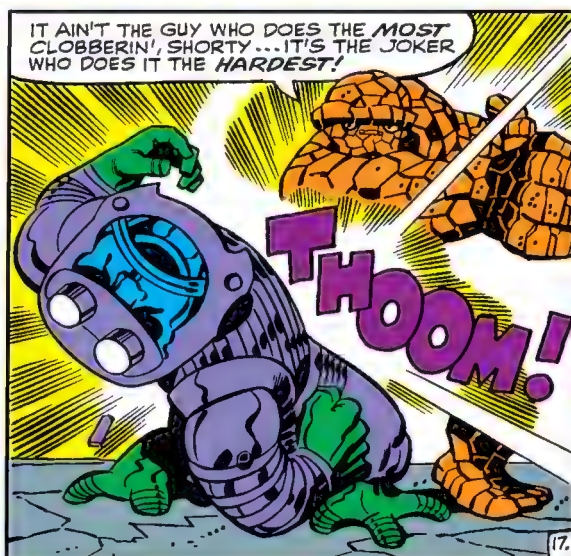
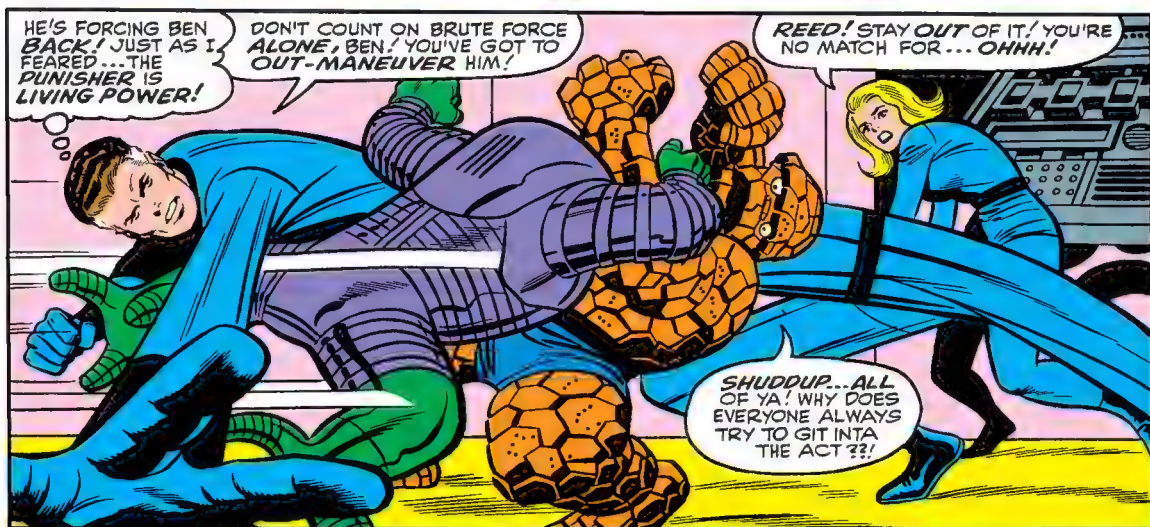
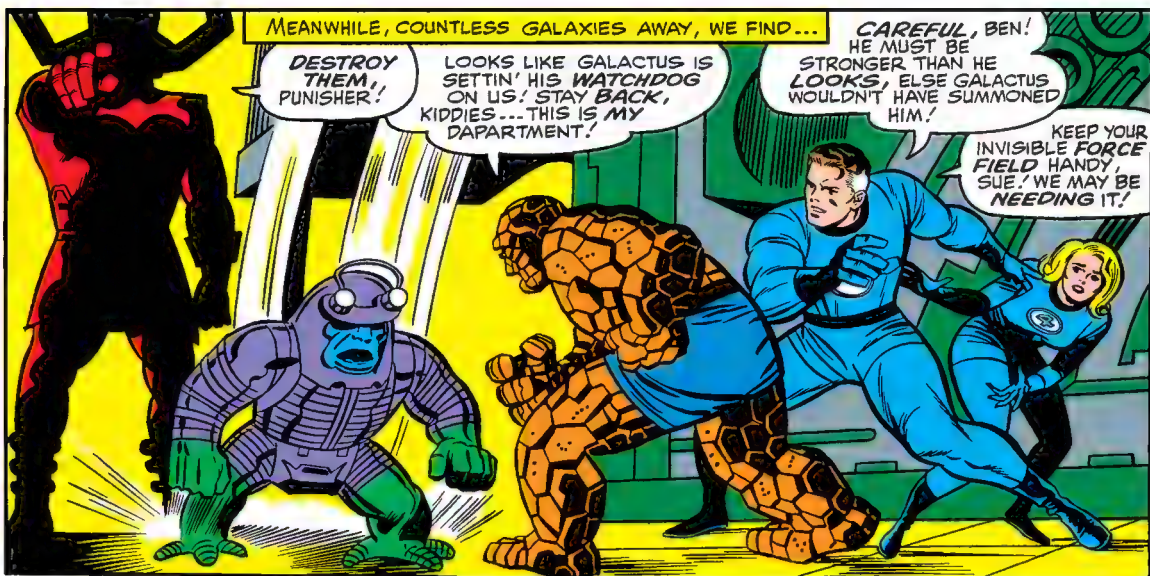
LET THE *PUNISHER* APPEAR!

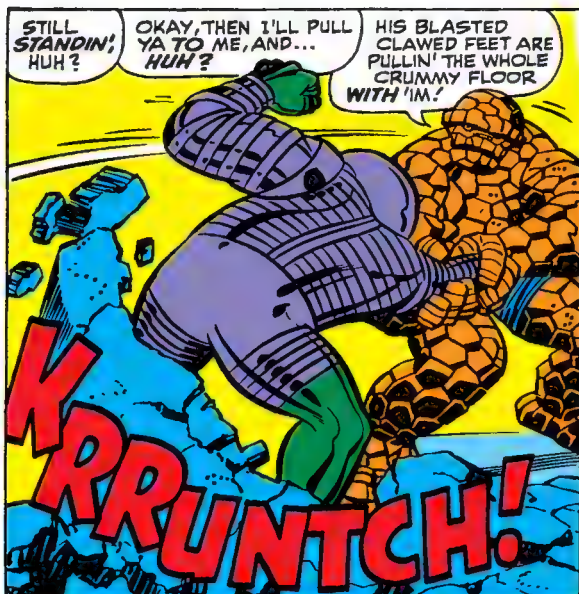


NO SOONER DOES THE POWERFUL RAY STRIKE THE ALIEN CRAFT, THAN A HIDDEN HATCH SLIDES OPEN, REVEALING A STRANGE, HEAVILY-ARMED BEING ...HALF-ROBOT...HALF ALIVE... THIS, THEN, IS THE *PUNISHER*, A COMPACT, SUPREMELY MERCILESS, HARD-CORE MASS OF MAYHEM, FROM THE VERY OUTER RIM OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE ...!









STILL
STANDIN'
HUH?

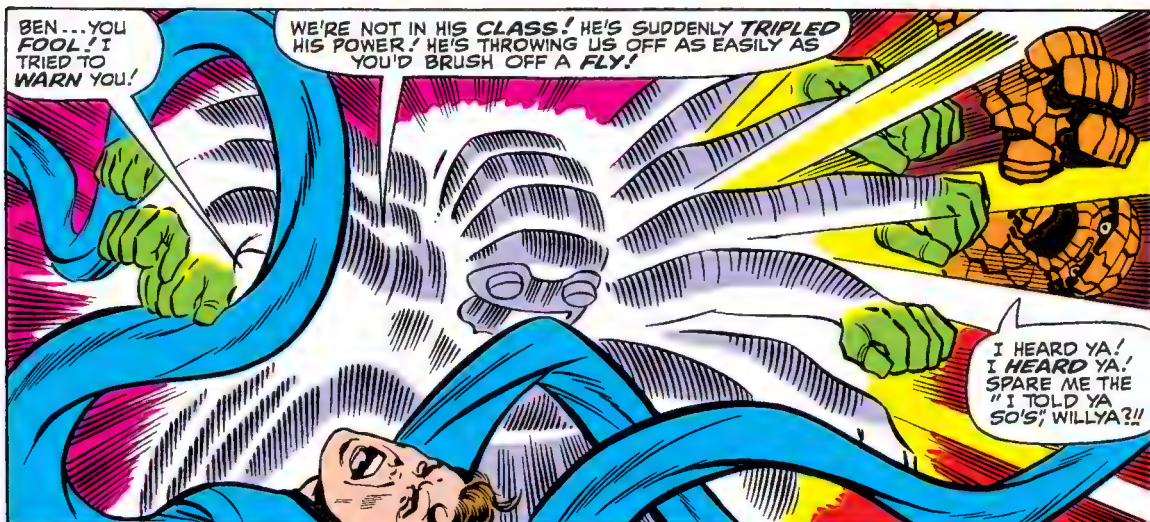
OKAY, THEN I'LL PULL
YA TO ME, AND...
HUH?

HIS BLASTED
CLAWED FEET ARE
PULLIN' THE WHOLE
CRUMMY FLOOR
WITH 'IM!



FACE IT, BEN! YOU'RE
NO MATCH FOR
THE PUNISHER!
TRY TO GET AWAY
WHILE I
RESTRAIN
HIM.

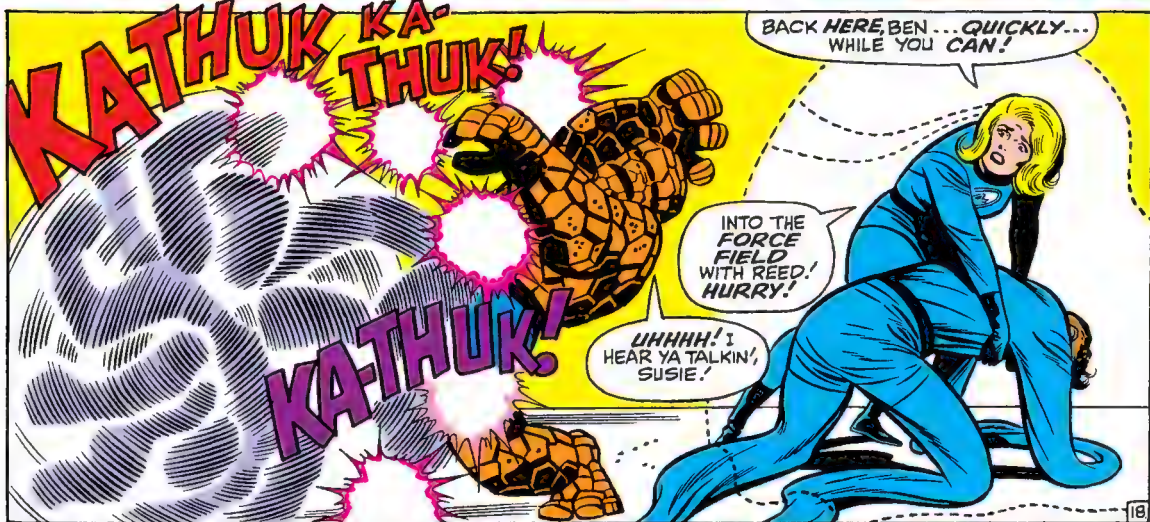
"GET
AWAY" MY
FOOT!
I'M JUST
GITTIN'
STARTED!



BEN... YOU
FOOL! I
TRIED TO
WARN YOU!

WE'RE NOT IN HIS CLASS! HE'S SUDDENLY TRIPLED
HIS POWER! HE'S THROWING US OFF AS EASILY AS
YOU'D BRUSH OFF A FLY!

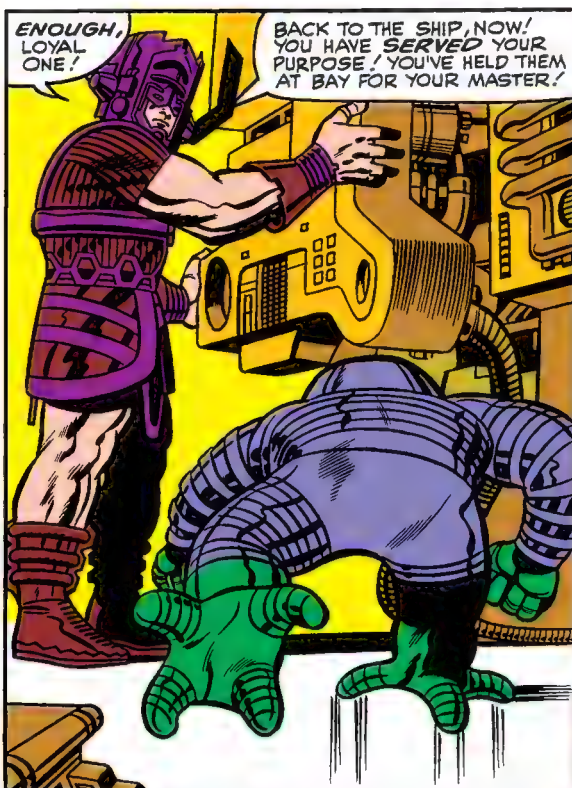
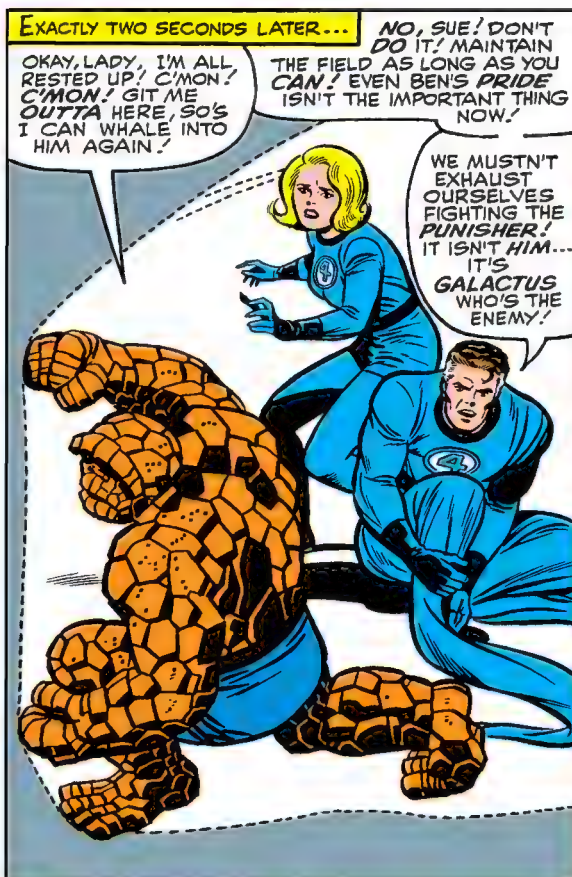
I HEARD YA!
I HEARD YA!
SPARE ME THE
"I TOLD YA
SO'S" WILL YA?!!



BACK HERE, BEN... QUICKLY...
WHILE YOU CAN!

INTO THE
FORCE
FIELD
WITH REED!
HURRY!

UHHH! I
HEAR YA TALKIN',
SUSIE!



THEN, JUST AS THE GRIM-FACED **THING** TURNS HIS THOUGHTS TO THE GIRL HE LOVES, WONDERING IF HE'LL EVER SEE HER AGAIN, WE TURN **ALSO** TO ALICIA MASTERS... AND THE **SILVER SURFER**...!

ACCORDING TO THE RADIO, OUR ENTIRE **PLANET** IS IN THE GRAVEST DANGER!

BUT, I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING THAT SOMEHOW YOU POSSESS THE POWER TO **SAVE US!**

I? DEFY **GALACTUS**? IT IS **UN-THINKABLE!**

THEN, YOU COULD STAND BY AND SEE A **WORLD** DESTROYED ??

PERHAPS, HUMAN.. YOU WERE **NOT** TOTALLY WRONG..!

HOW...HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO **WRONG** ABOUT YOU...WHEN I SENSED NOBILITY...WHEN I THOUGHT YOU POSSESSED... COMPASSION.

PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHIN MEMORY...

I HAVE **FOUND** SOMETHING... SOMETHING WORTH **PROTECTING!**

EVEN THOUGH IT MEANS I MUST DO BATTLE WITH...THE **MASTER!**

IT IS **GALACTUS** WHO IS THE **POWER!** I AM MERELY HIS **HERALD!** AND YET...

WE ARE **BOTH** TRAVELERS IN THE COSMOS! MY **OWN** POWER HAS NEVER BEEN FULLY TESTED!

BUT, THERE IS ONE WHO SEES ALL... ONE WHO OBSERVES THE **SILVER SURFER** WITH A FEELING OF COLD, NAMELESS **DREAD**...

THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT IS ONE I DID NOT **ANTICIPATE!** NEVER BEFORE HAS HIS FAITHFUL HERALD DARED TO DEFY **GALACTUS!**

THIS MEANS A **NEW ELEMENT** HAS ENTERED THE GREAT COSMIC GAME OF LIFE AND DEATH, AN ELEMENT WHICH MAY DESTROY MY **OWN** CAREFULLY-LAID PLAN TO DEFEND MANKIND!

WITHOUT **MEANING** TO, THE **SILVER SURFER** MAY HIMSELF BE THE CAUSE OF **EARTH'S** TOTAL DESTRUCTION!

NEXT ISSUE:
DON'T MISS OUR
MIND-STAGGERING
CONCLUSION!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

50
MAY

IND.

12¢

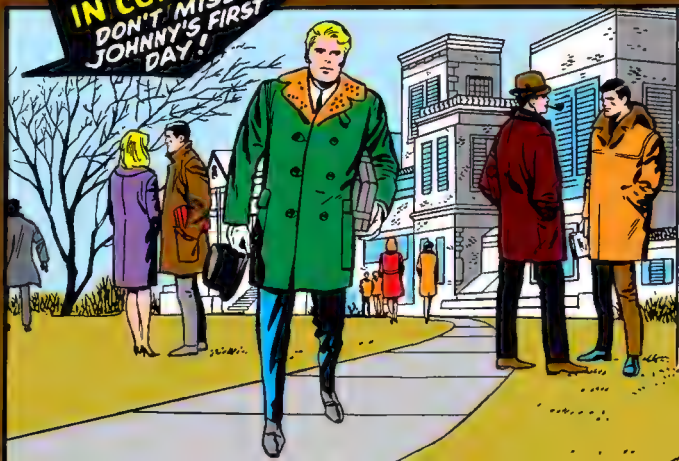
Fantastic Four

THE
STARTLING
SAGA OF..

DO THE
SILVER

SURFER!

AT LAST!
THE
HUMAN
TORCH
IN COLLEGE!
DON'T MISS
JOHNNY'S FIRST
DAY!



MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

THE FABULOUS **FANTASTIC FOUR** BECOME A PART OF:

"THE STARTLING SAGA OF THE SILVER SURFER!"

THE AWESOME **GALACTUS** HAS CHOSEN **EARTH** TO PROVIDE HIM WITH THE ENERGY HE NEEDS TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF. BUT, IN STRIPPING A PLANET OF ITS **ENERGY**, **GALACTUS** ALSO DRAINS AWAY ALL **LIFE** FROM THE HELPLESS WORLD. FOR AGES, THE MIGHTY ALIEN HAS THUS PLUNDERED THE PLANETS... BUT NOW, HIS ONCE-LOYAL HERALD, THE GLISTENING **SILVER SURFER**, HAS TURNED AGAINST HIM, AND ONE OF THE MOST MIND-STAGGERING BATTLES OF ALL TIME IS ABOUT TO BEGIN... WITH MARVELITES EVERYWHERE PRIVILEGED TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE WONDER OF IT ALL...

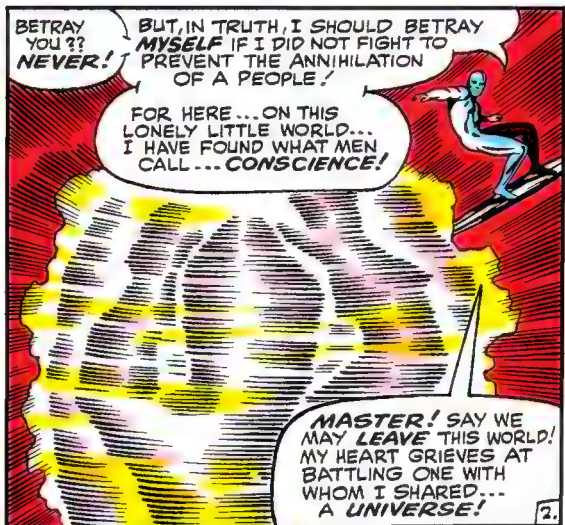
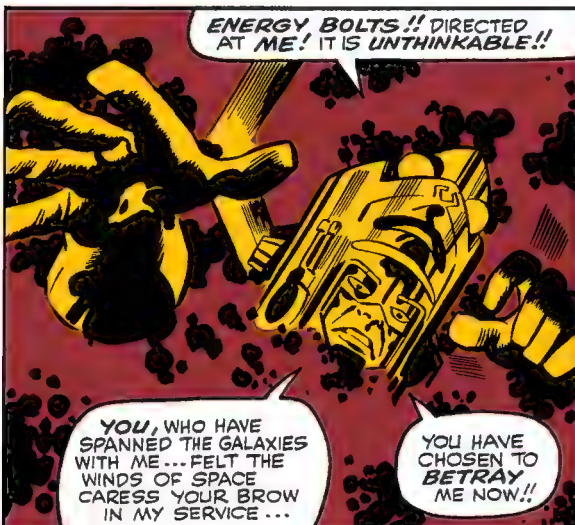
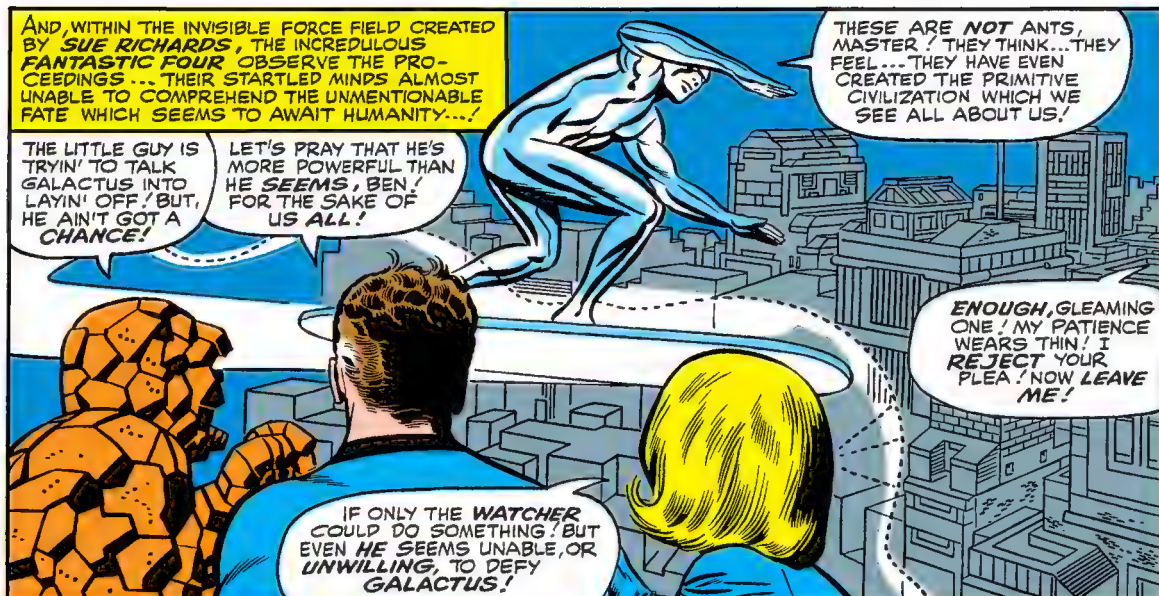
MASTER! FOR THE FIRST TIME I REALIZE THE PREAD-FUL **ENORMITY** OF WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO! YOU MUST NOT TAMPER WITH OTHER WORLDS! YOU CANNOT DESTROY THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!

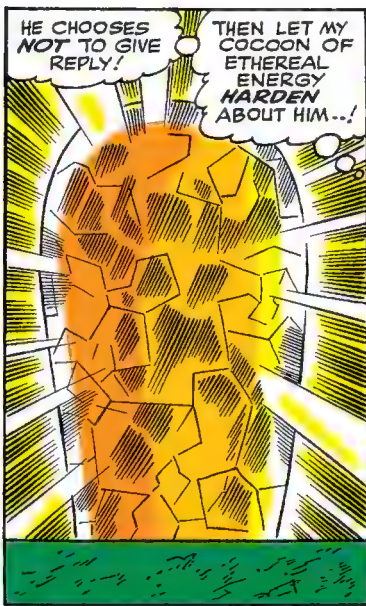
WOULD YOU HESITATE TO TREAD UPON AN **ANT HILL**? THESE CREATURES ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE TO **GALACTUS**!

GREATER THAN THE GREATEST!

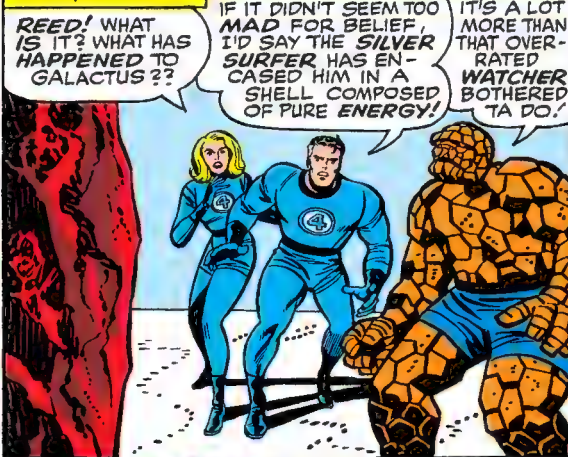
SCRIPT: **STAN LEE**
ART: **JACK KIRBY**
INKS: **JOE SINNOTT**
LETTERING: **S. ROSEN**

PEERLESS PAGEANTRY, AT THE PEAK OF PROUD PERFECTION!

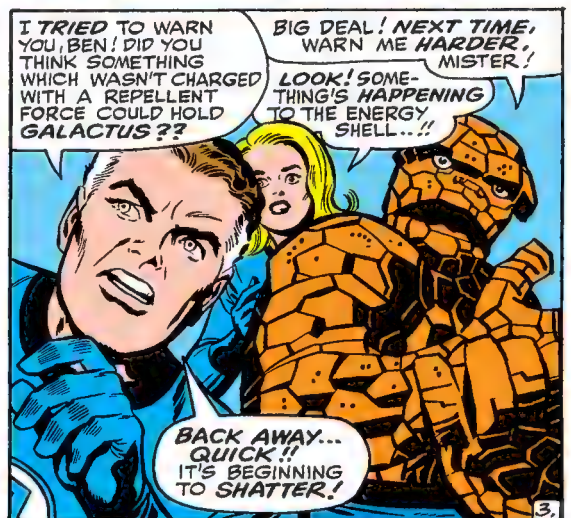
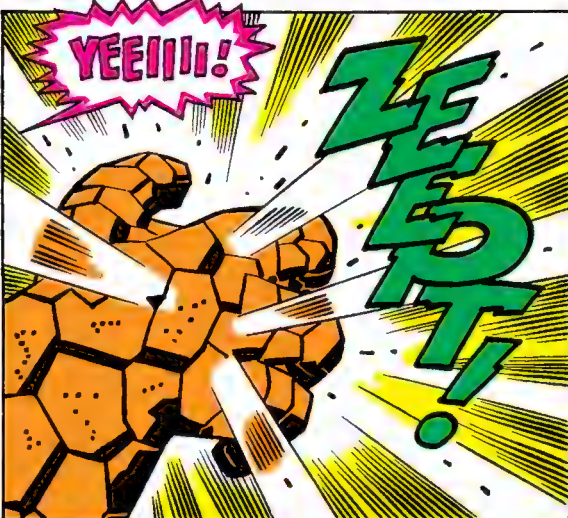


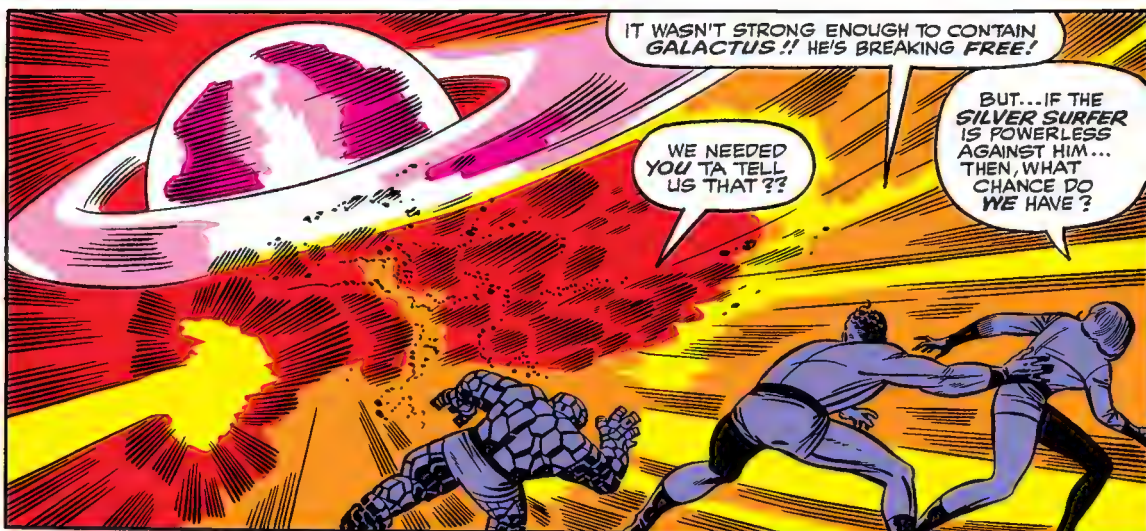


AS THE SILENT SECONDS TICK BY, A DAZED SUSAN STORM SLOWLY RELEASES HER PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD, UNTIL ...



LET'S SEE IF THIS STUFF IS AS STRONG AS IT LOOKS! I AIN'T NEVER FELT A HUNKA ENERGY BEFORE...

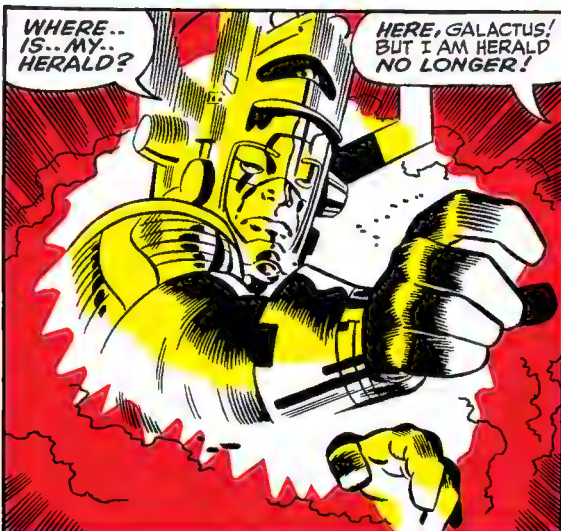




IT WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO CONTAIN GALACTUS!! HE'S BREAKING FREE!

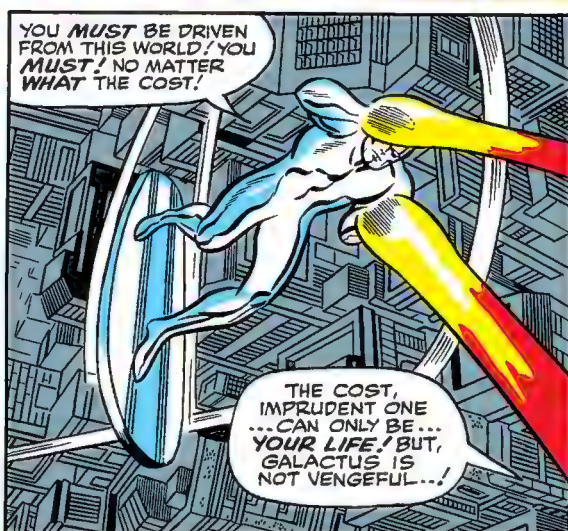
WE NEEDED YOU TA TELL US THAT??

BUT...IF THE SILVER SURFER IS POWERLESS AGAINST HIM... THEN, WHAT CHANCE DO WE HAVE?



WHERE.. IS.. MY.. HERALD?

HERE, GALACTUS! BUT I AM HERALD NO LONGER!



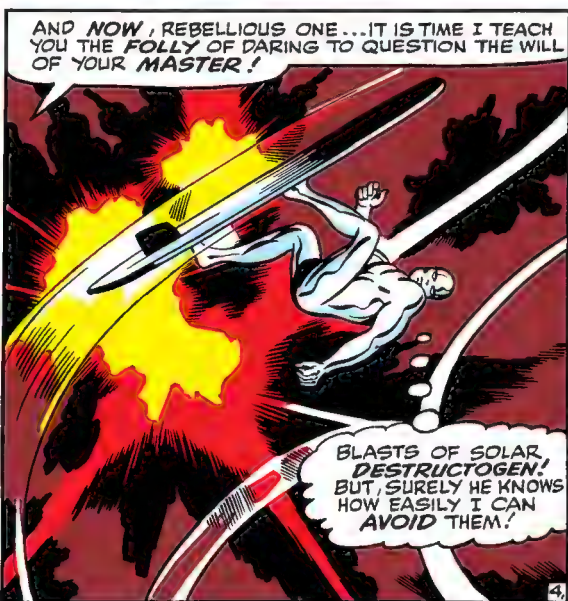
YOU MUST BE DRIVEN FROM THIS WORLD! YOU MUST! NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!

THE COST, IMPRUDENT ONE ...CAN ONLY BE... YOUR LIFE! BUT, GALACTUS IS NOT VENGEFUL...



YOU HAVE SERVED ME WELL IN THE PAST... YOU SHALL DO SO AGAIN! ALL ETERNITY AWAITS ME! I CAN AFFORD TO BE PATIENT!

CAN YOU NOT SEE HOW EASILY MY IMPENETRABLE ABSORBA SHIELD DEFLECTS YOUR FOOLISH RAYS OF STAR-FIRE?!!



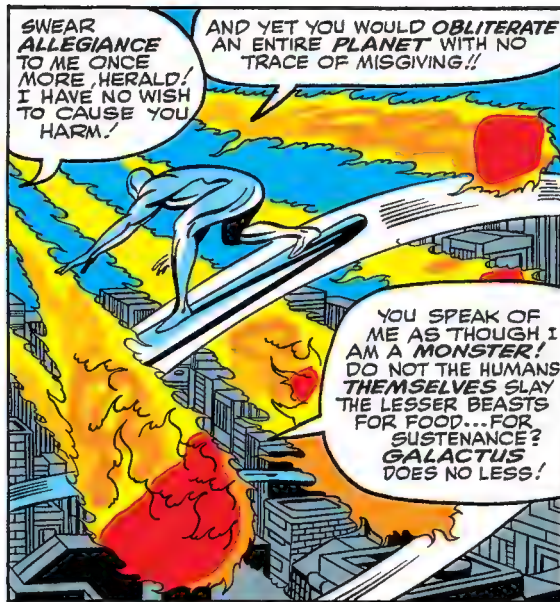
AND NOW, REBELLIOUS ONE... IT IS TIME I TEACH YOU THE FOLLY OF DARING TO QUESTION THE WILL OF YOUR MASTER!

BLASTS OF SOLAR DESTRUCTOGEN! BUT, SURELY HE KNOWS HOW EASILY I CAN AVOID THEM!



I AM **AWARE** OF YOUR SKILL, HERALD! I HAVE SEEN YOU DODGE THE METEOR SWARMS OF SPACE... I HAVE TAKEN PRIDE AT THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU HAVE HURTTLED THE COMETS...!

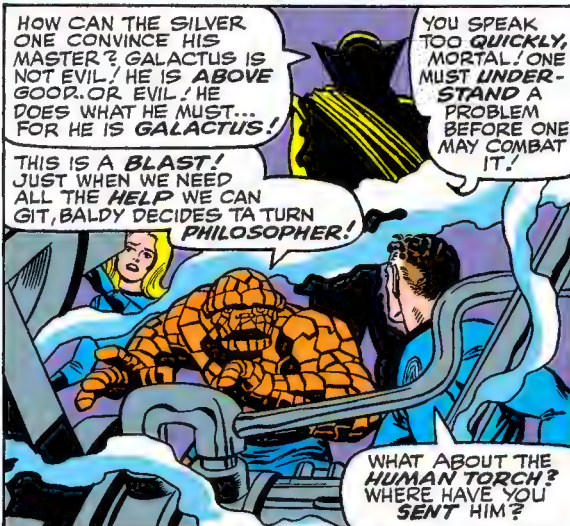
BUT **NOW**, YOU FACE A FAR GREATER OBSTACLE... NOW YOU FACE **GALACTUS!**



SWEAR **ALLEGIANCE** TO ME ONCE MORE, HERALD! I HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE YOU HARM.

AND YET YOU WOULD **OBLITERATE** AN ENTIRE **PLANET** WITH NO TRACE OF MISGIVING!!

YOU SPEAK OF ME AS THOUGH I AM A **MONSTER**! DO NOT THE HUMANS **THEMSELVES** SLAY THE LESSER BEASTS FOR FOOD... FOR SUSTENANCE? **GALACTUS** DOES NO LESS!

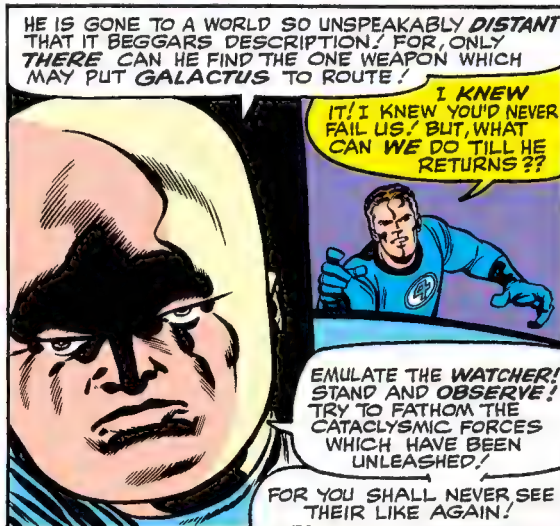


HOW CAN THE SILVER ONE CONVINCE HIS MASTER? GALACTUS IS NOT EVIL! HE IS **ABOVE** GOOD... OR EVIL! HE DOES WHAT HE MUST... FOR HE IS **GALACTUS!**

YOU SPEAK TOO **QUICKLY**, MORTAL! ONE MUST **UNDERSTAND** A PROBLEM BEFORE ONE MAY COMBAT IT!

THIS IS A **BLAST!** JUST WHEN WE NEED ALL THE **HELP** WE CAN GET, BALDY DECIDES TA TURN **PHILOSOPHER!**

WHAT ABOUT THE **HUMAN TORCH?** WHERE HAVE YOU **SENT** HIM?



HE IS GONE TO A WORLD SO UNSPEAKABLY **DISTANT** THAT IT BEGGARS DESCRIPTION! FOR, ONLY **THERE** CAN HE FIND THE ONE WEAPON WHICH MAY PUT **GALACTUS** TO ROUTE!

I **KNEW** IT! I KNEW YOU'D NEVER FAIL US! BUT, WHAT CAN WE DO TILL HE RETURNS??

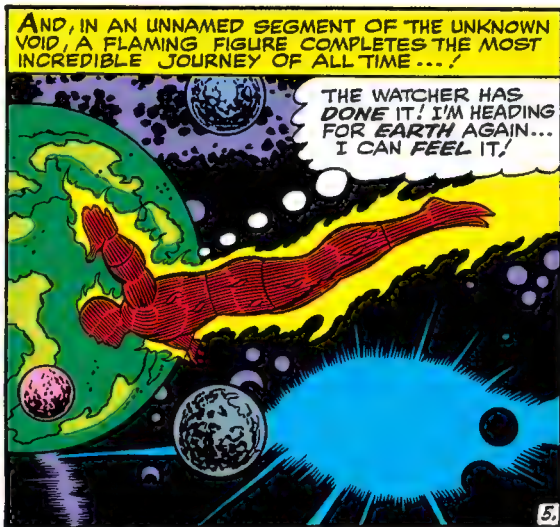
EMULATE THE **WATCHER!** STAND AND **OBSERVE!** TRY TO FATHOM THE CATAclysmic FORCES WHICH HAVE BEEN UNLEASHED!

FOR YOU SHALL NEVER SEE THEIR LIKE AGAIN!



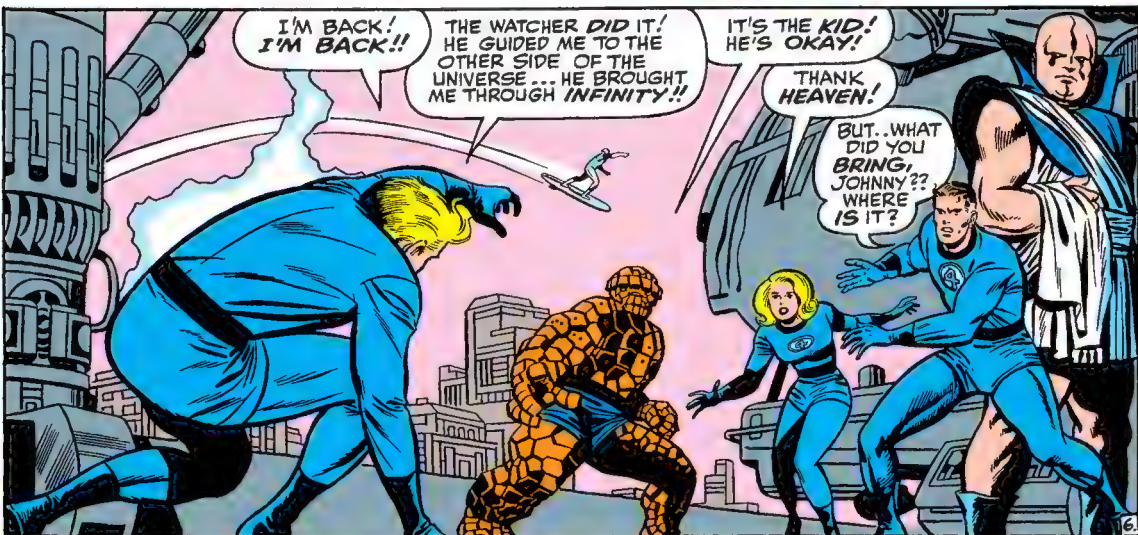
AS FOR **ME**... I DO NOT STAND SILENT... MOTION-LESS... DUE TO LACK OF **CONCERN!** LONG HAVE I CHERISHED THE STUMBLING, BUMBLING, BUT ALWAYS ASPIRING **HUMAN RACE!**

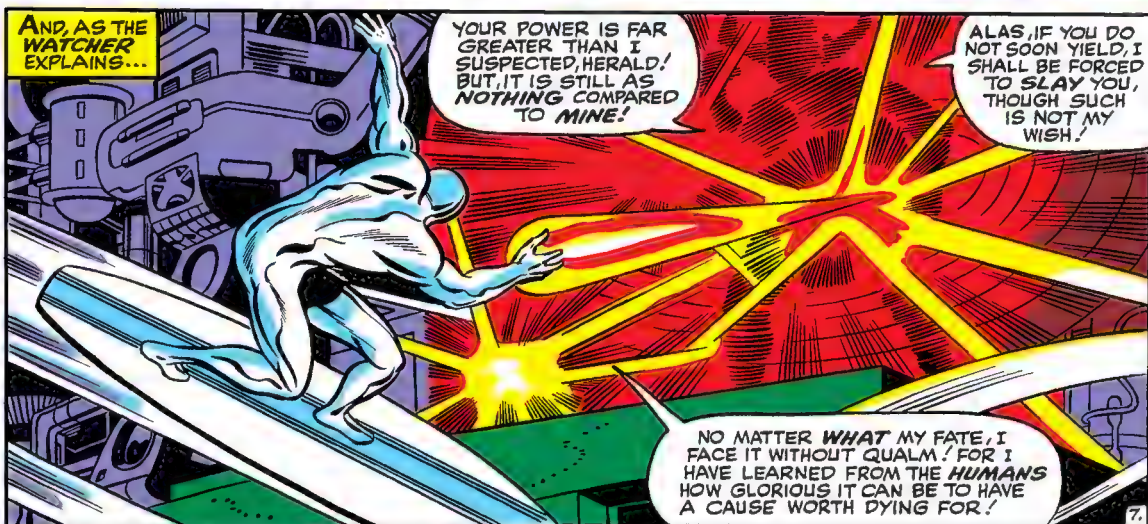
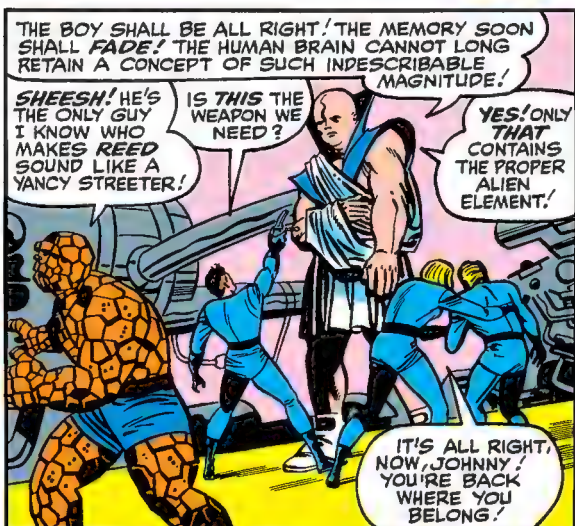
YEA... EVEN AS I UTTER THESE WORDS, I AM IN MENTAL CONTACT WITH THE **HUMAN TORCH!** I AM GUIDING HIM THROUGH A MAZE OF ENDLESS GALAXIES... PROTECTING HIM FROM THE RAVAGES OF INFINITE SPACE!

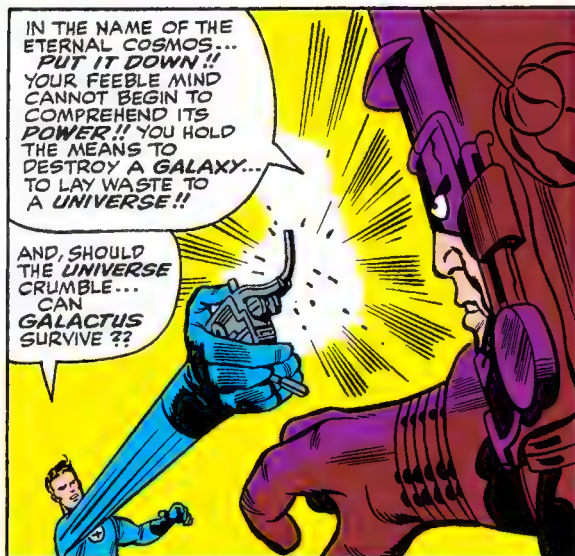
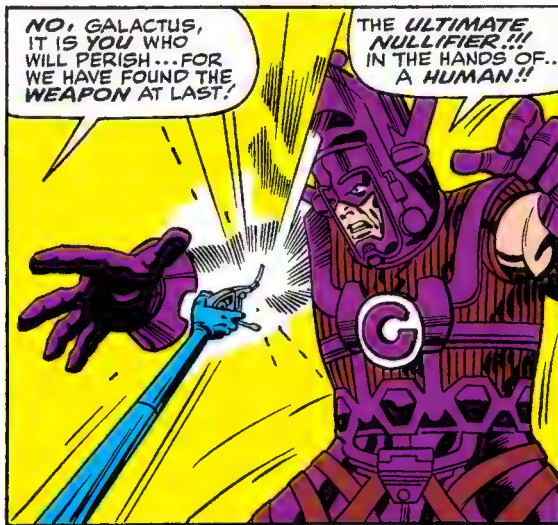
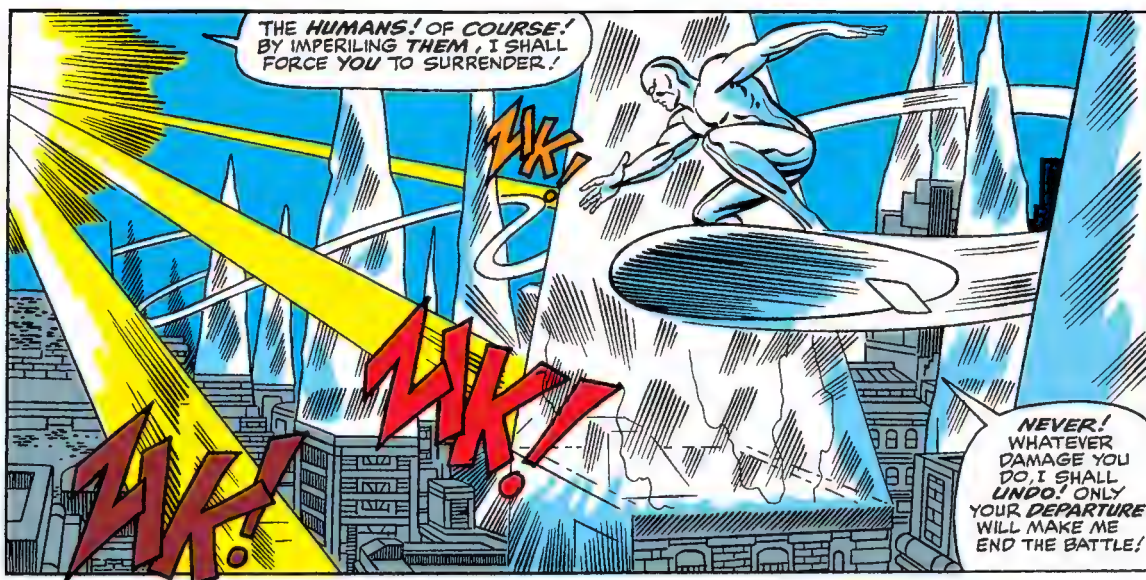


AND, IN AN UNNAMED SEGMENT OF THE UNKNOWN VOID, A FLAMING FIGURE COMPLETES THE MOST INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF ALL TIME...!

THE **WATCHER** HAS DONE IT! I'M HEADING FOR **EARTH** AGAIN... I CAN FEEL IT!









CONSIDER THE **COURAGE** THEY DISPLAY! THOUGH THEY ARE STILL IN THEIR **INFANCY**, YOU MUST NOT **DISDAIN** THEM! DID NOT **YOUR RACE...** AND **MINE...** EVOLVE FROM SUCH HUMBLE BEGINNINGS? DO THEY NOT POSSESS THE SEED OF **GRANDEUR** WITHIN THEIR FRAIL, HUMAN FRAMES?

BUT, WHAT OF **GALACTUS**? WHAT OF THE LIMITLESS **ENERGY** I MUST ABSORB, IF I AM TO SURVIVE?



I GROW WEARY! THE PRIZE IS NOT WORTH THE BATTLE! LET THE HUMAN SURRENDER HIS WEAPON, AND I SHALL TARRY HERE NO LONGER!

DO AS HE SAYS, MORTAL! THE PROMISE OF **GALACTUS** IS LIVING **TRUTH** ITSELF!

HIS WORD CAN NEVER BE QUESTIONED!



SO! FOR THE FIRST TIME... SINCE THE DAWN OF MEMORY... MY WILL HAS BEEN **THWARTED**! BUT I BEAR NO MALICE! EMOTION IS FOR **LESSER BEINGS**!

YET, THERE IS **ONE** THING THAT MUST BE DONE...



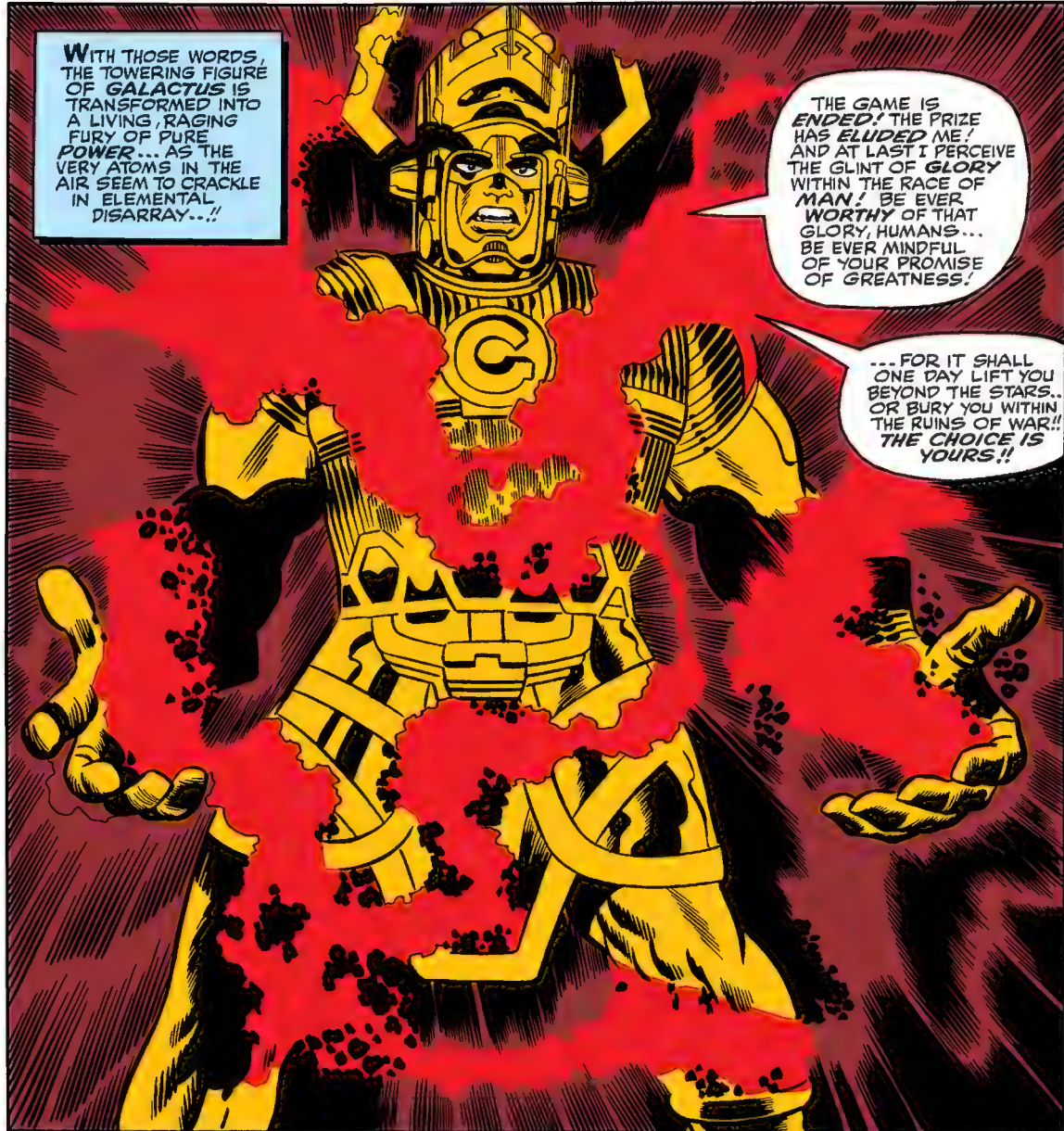
SINCE YOU SHALL BE HERALD TO **GALACTUS** NO LONGER, I REMOVE YOUR SPACE-TIME POWERS!

HENCEFORTH, THE **SILVER SURFER** SHALL ROAM THE GALAXIES **NO MORE**!

WITH THOSE WORDS, THE TOWERING FIGURE OF GALACTUS IS TRANSFORMED INTO A LIVING, RAGING FURY OF PURE POWER... AS THE VERY ATOMS IN THE AIR SEEM TO CRACKLE IN ELEMENTAL DISARRAY...!!

THE GAME IS ENDED! THE PRIZE HAS ELUDED ME! AND AT LAST I PERCEIVE THE GLINT OF GLORY WITHIN THE RACE OF MAN! BE EVER WORTHY OF THAT GLORY, HUMANS... BE EVER MINDFUL OF YOUR PROMISE OF GREATNESS!

...FOR IT SHALL ONE DAY LIFT YOU BEYOND THE STARS.. OR BURY YOU WITHIN THE RUINS OF WAR!! THE CHOICE IS YOURS!!



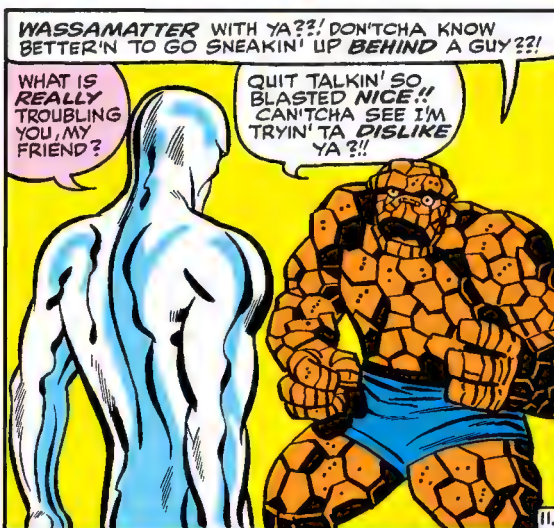
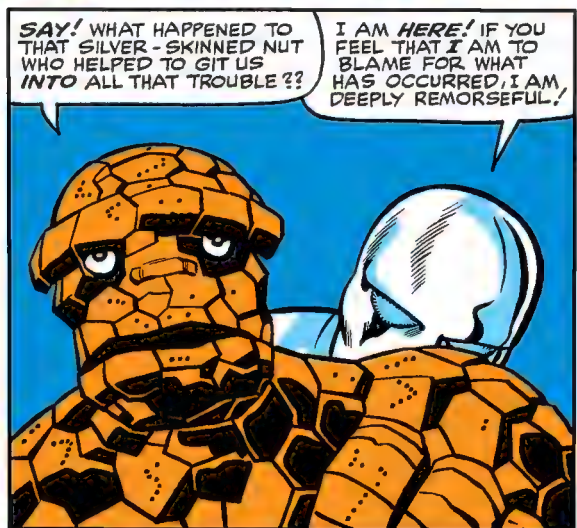
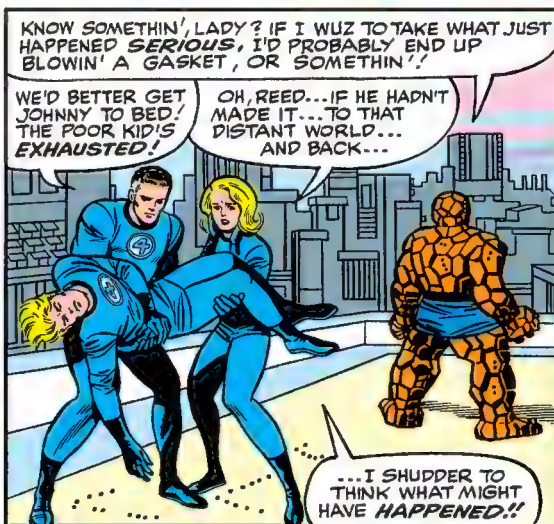
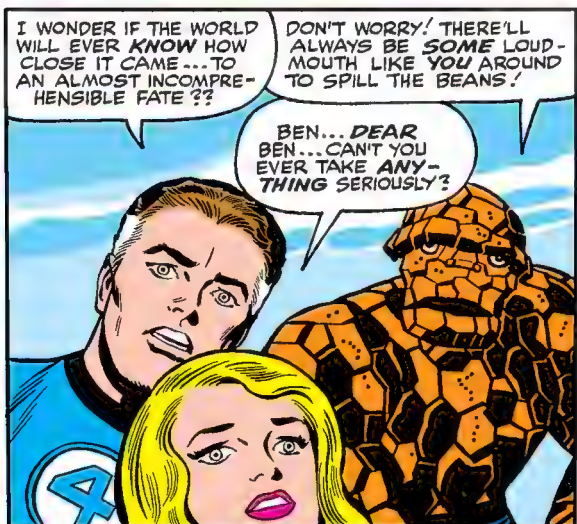
NOW, TURN AWAY!! FOR I SHALL DEPART VIA DIMENSIONAL DISPLACEMENT... HARNESSING FORCES BEYOND THE LIMITS OF YOUR COMPREHENSION!

HE'S BEGINNING TO GLOW... TO VIBRATE... LIKE SOME ETHEREAL TITAN!

GET BACK... ALL OF YOU! THIS SIGHT WAS NEVER MEANT FOR HUMAN EYES!

CAN'T YOU EVER GET STRUCK SPEECHLESS, LIKE THE REST OF US??!





BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, BEN GRIMM BEGINS TO LEARN THAT HE MAY **REALLY** HAVE A REASON TO FEEL LESS THAN FRIENDLY TO THE GLISTENING STRANGER IN THEIR MIDST...

ALICIA! HOW'D SHE GET UP HERE SO SOON?

WHAT HAPPENED? IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT? TELL ME THAT NO ONE WAS HURT!

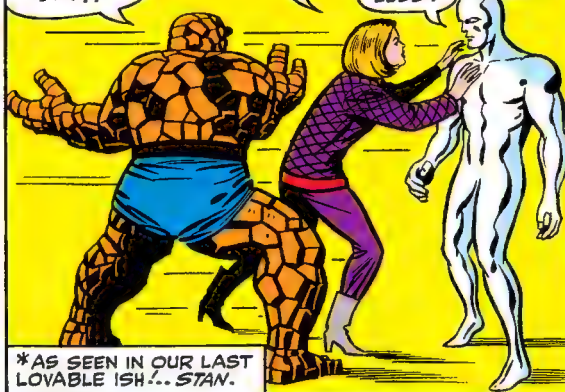
IT'S ALL OVER NOW, ALICIA! THERE'S NO CAUSE FOR WORRY! NO HARM WAS DONE!



YA DIDN'T HAVETA WORRY ABOUT ME, BABY! YA SHOULD'VE KNOWNED I... I...??

IT'S YOU! YOU DID IT! YOU TURNED AGAINST GALACTUS... AS I PRAYED YOU WOULD!*

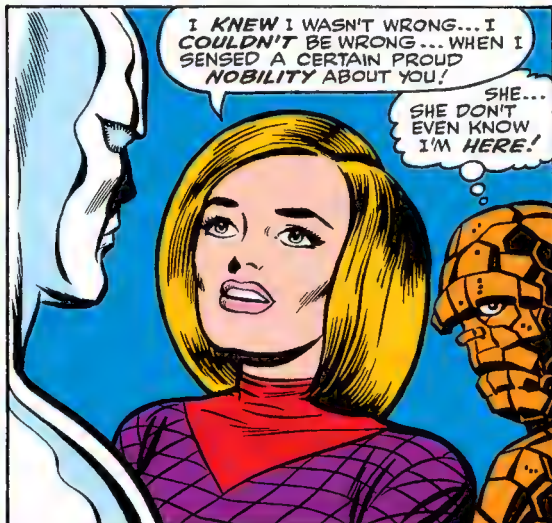
AFTER YOU TAUGHT ME THE MEANING OF KINDNESS... OF PITY... I COULD DO NO LESS!



*AS SEEN IN OUR LAST LOVABLE ISH... STAN.

I KNEW I WASN'T WRONG... I COULDN'T BE WRONG... WHEN I SENSED A CERTAIN PROUD NOBILITY ABOUT YOU!

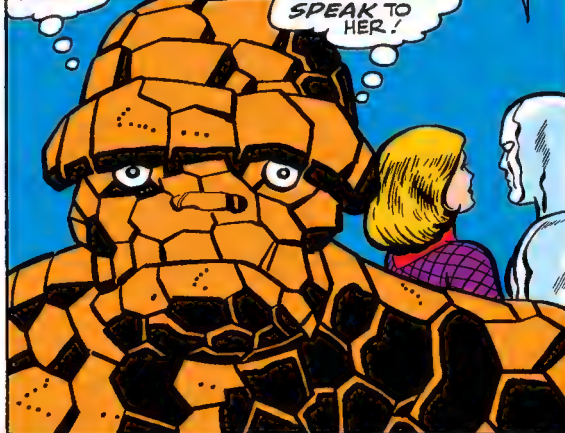
SHE... SHE DON'T EVEN KNOW I'M HERE!



THERE IS STILL SO MUCH I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT EARTH... ABOUT MANKIND... BUT NOW, I SHALL HAVE THE REST OF MY LIFE TO LEARN... FOR, IN FINDING A CONSCIENCE... I HAVE LOST... THE STARS!

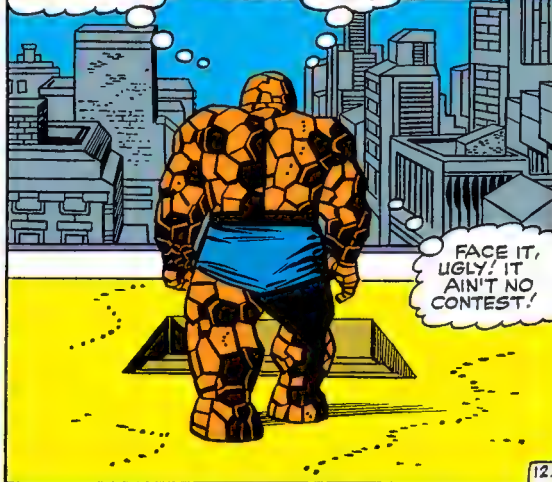
HE TALKS LIKE... A POET!

AND SHE'S LISTENIN'... LIKE IT'S THE FIRST TIME SHE EVER HEARD A GUY SPEAK TO HER!

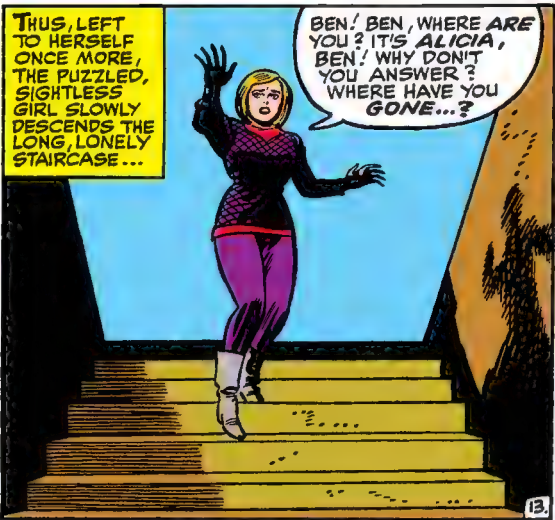
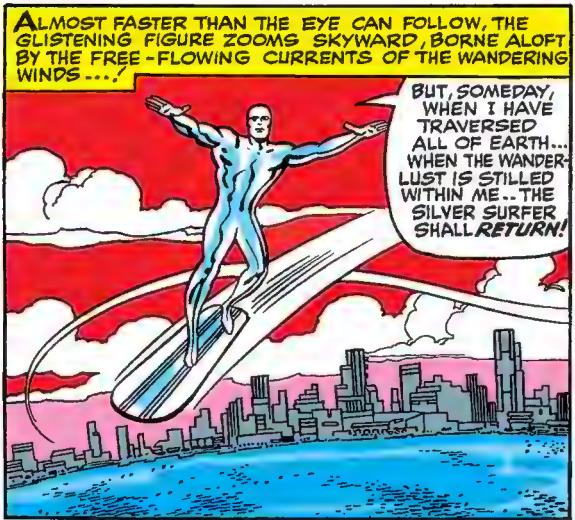
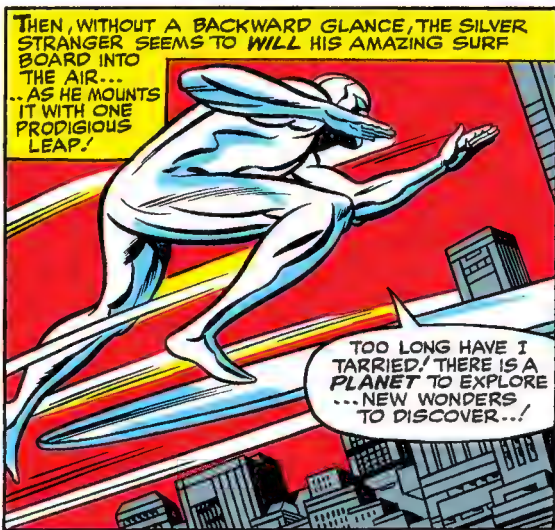
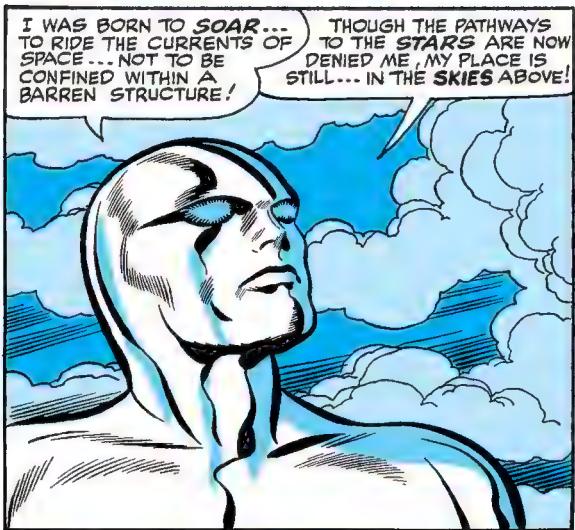
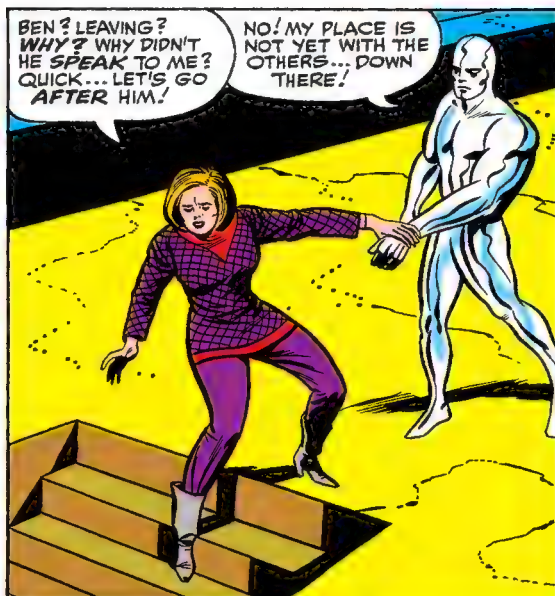
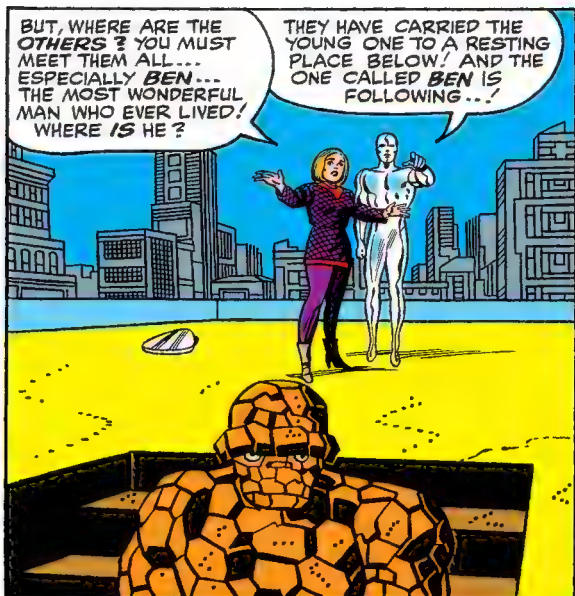


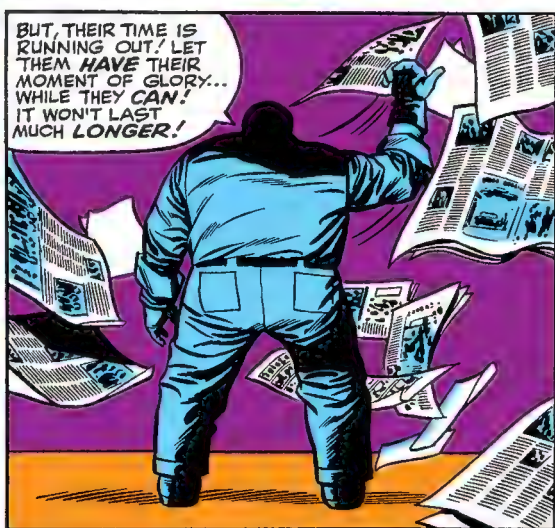
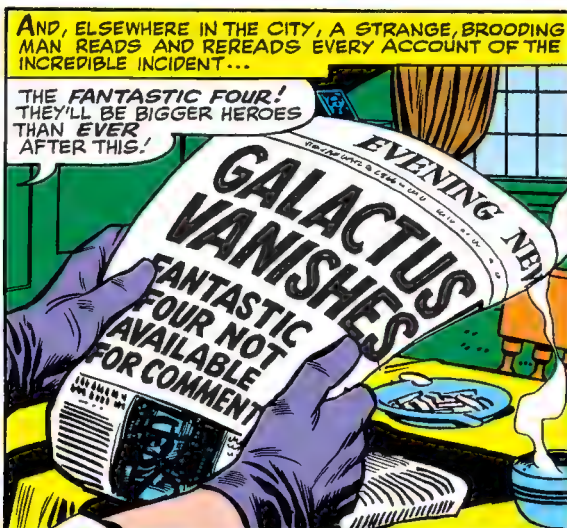
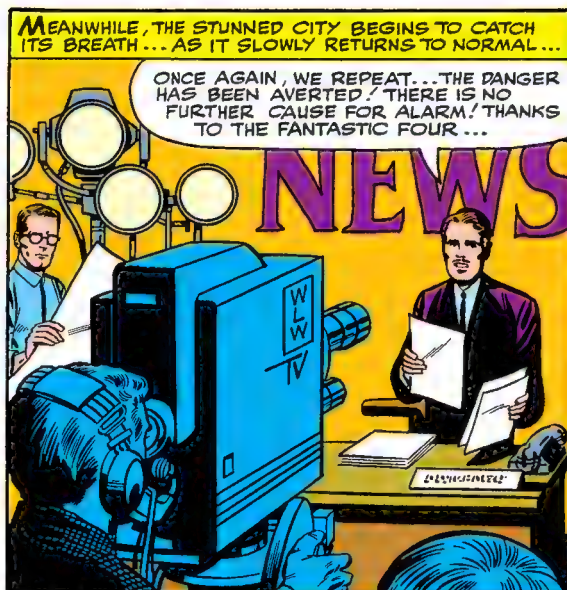
I CAN'T EVEN GIT MAD! HE DIDN'T TRY TA BEAT MY TIME! IT JUST HAPPENED!

ANYHOW, IF I WUZ ALICIA... WHO WOULD I PICK?? A GLEAMIN' GLADIATOR LIKE HIM... OR AN APE LIKE ME?



FACE IT, UGLY! IT AIN'T NO CONTEST!





BUT, WE MUST NOT GET AHEAD OF OUR TALE! ALTHOUGH THE OMINOUS CHARACTER YOU HAVE JUST MET WILL FIGURE VERY PROMINENTLY... VERY DANGEROUSLY... IN THE LIVES OF THE FF, WE MUST NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE... TO A SCRIMMAGE SESSION ON THE GRIDIRON OF METRO COLLEGE, JUST ACROSS THE RIVER FROM MANHATTAN...

TIME! I SAID TIME! THAT'S IT FOR TODAY! AT LEAST WE DON'T HAVE TO FRET ABOUT SATURDAY'S GAME NOW... YOU CAN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN YOU'VE BEEN!

BUT I DON'T WANNA UPSET ANY OF YOU ALL-STARS! THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! IF WE'RE LUCKY, I'LL BE ABLE TO REPLACE YOU WITH SOME BLONDE CHEER-LEADERS BEFORE THE GAME BEGINS!



AND IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH TO ASK, WHERE WAS WHITEY MULLINS TODAY? I KINDA LIKE TO SEE OUR STAR QUARTERBACK AT PRACTICE, NOW AND THEN!

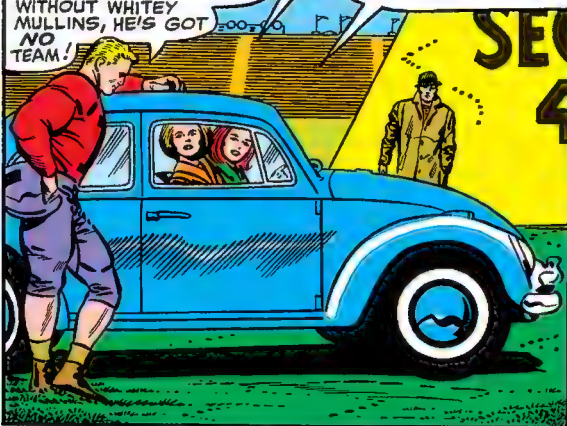
WE'D LIKE TO SEE HIM TOO, COACH! WE'LL BE NEEDING HIM SATURDAY!



HERE COMES COACH THORNE, WHITEY! SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE BEEN AT PRACTICE TODAY?

RELAX, DOLL! NOBODY TELLS ME WHAT TO DO! WITHOUT WHITEY MULLINS, HE'S GOT NO TEAM!

I STILL THINK IT'S TIME WE WERE GOING!



SO THERE YOU ARE! WHAT'S THE DEAL, WHITEY? YOU FIGURE YOU'RE TOO BIG TO RUB NOSES WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM AT PRACTICE?

COOL IT, COACH! I JUST GOT TIED UP, THAT'S ALL! YOU KNOW I'LL BE THERE IN THE PINCH, WHEN YOU NEED ME! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!



WRONG, MISTER! IT'S THE TEAM THAT MATTERS! YOU OWE SOMETHING TO THOSE OTHER MEN, TOO!

I OWE 'EM NOTHIN'! WITHOUT ME, THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF SCARECROWS... AND WE BOTH KNOW IT!

AND WITHOUT ME WINNING FOR YA, YOU'RE JUST A HAS-BEEN YOURSELF!

A HAS-BEEN, AM I? NOW LOOK, MULLINS...!

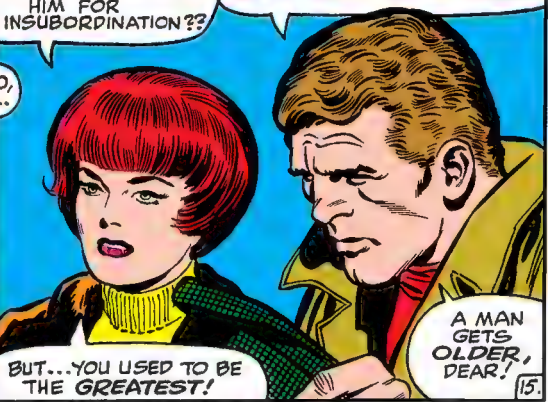
HELLO, SAM...



THERE'S YOUR WIFE, COACH! I'LL SEE YA AROUND, HEAR?

I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING, DEAR! WHY DO YOU TAKE IT FROM HIM? WHY DON'T YOU BENCH HIM FOR INSUBORDINATION??

BECAUSE... HE'S RIGHT, BELLE! I AM A HAS-BEEN! I... I DON'T SEEM TO HAVE IT, ANY MORE! IF NOT FOR WHITEY SPARKING THE TEAM, WE WOULDN'T WIN A GAME!



BUT... YOU USED TO BE THE GREATEST!

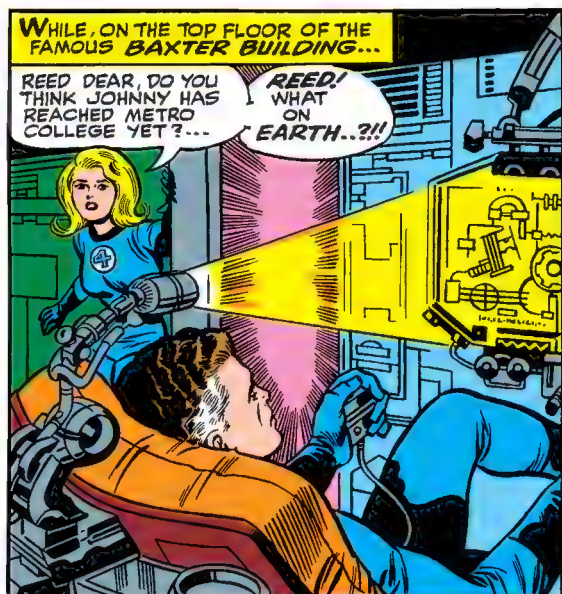
A MAN GETS OLDER, DEAR!



BUT, IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT! YOU'RE AS GOOD AS YOU WERE YEARS AGO... WHEN THEY COMPARED YOU TO **ROCKNE!** BUT YOU NEED A **TEAM...** YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL YOURSELF!

IF ONLY I HAD ANOTHER REAL ATHLETE... AN ALL-AROUND **STAR...** LIKE THE OLD-TIME GREATS I USED TO COACH!

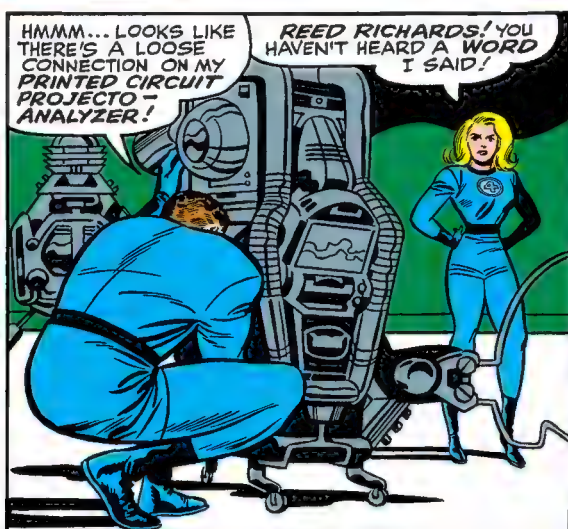
THEN I COULD RETIRE AT LAST... WITH **DIGNITY!**



WHILE, ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE FAMOUS **BAXTER BUILDING...**

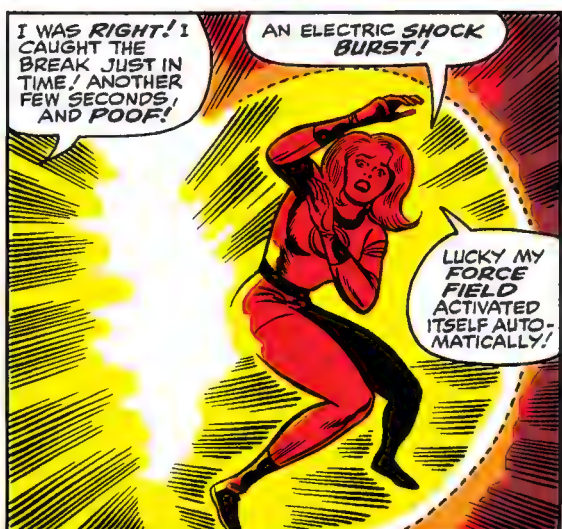
REED DEAR, DO YOU THINK JOHNNY HAS REACHED METRO COLLEGE YET?...

REED! WHAT ON EARTH...?!!



HMMM... LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A LOOSE CONNECTION ON MY **PRINTED CIRCUIT PROJECTO-ANALYZER!**

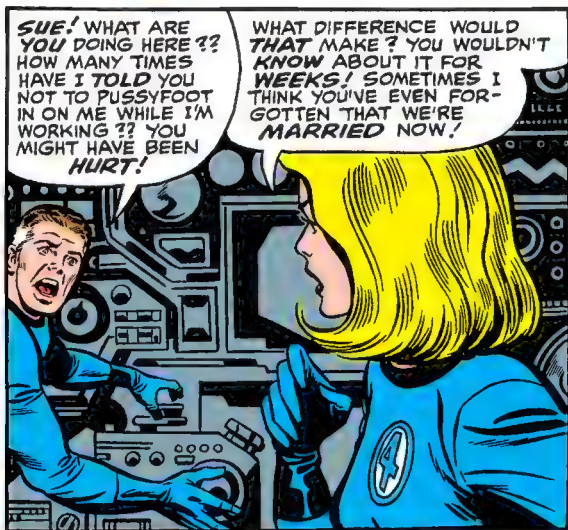
REED RICHARDS! YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I SAID!



I WAS **RIGHT!** I CAUGHT THE BREAK JUST IN TIME! ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, AND **POOF!**

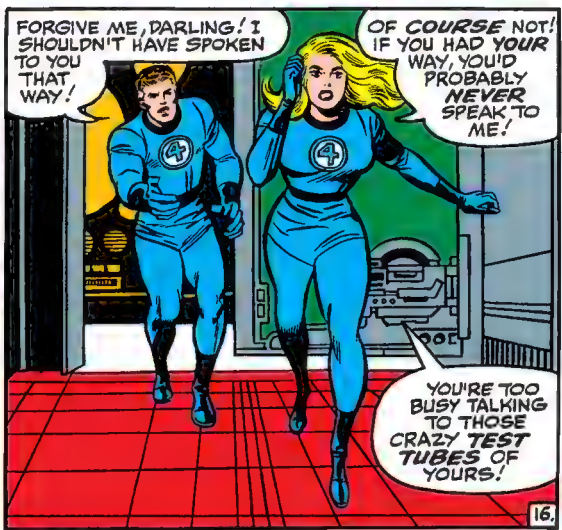
AN **ELECTRIC SHOCK BURST!**

LUCKY MY **FORCE FIELD** ACTIVATED ITSELF **AUTO-MATICALLY!**



SUE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ?? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I **TOLD** YOU NOT TO **PUSSYFOOT** IN ON ME WHILE I'M WORKING ?? YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN **HURT!**

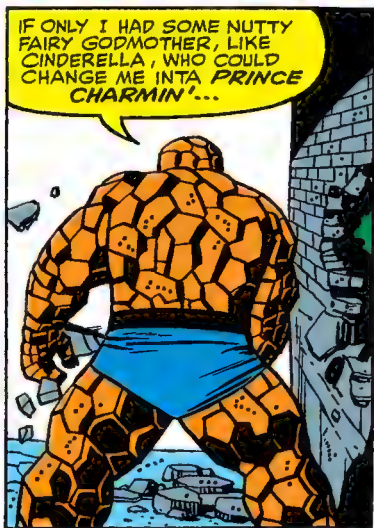
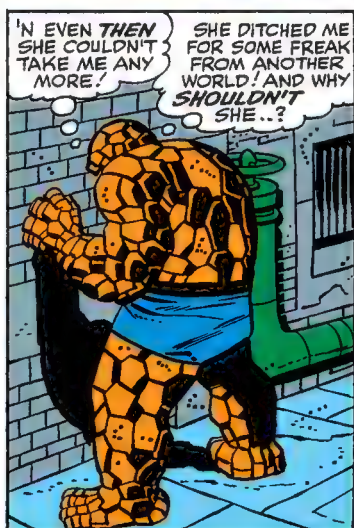
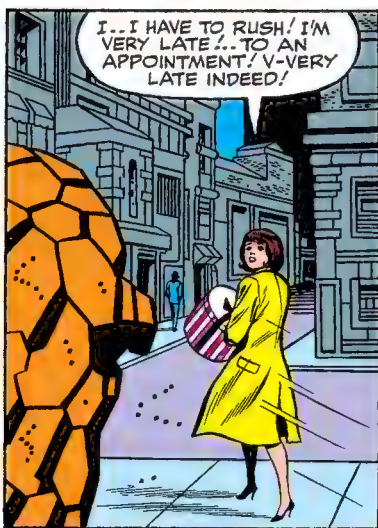
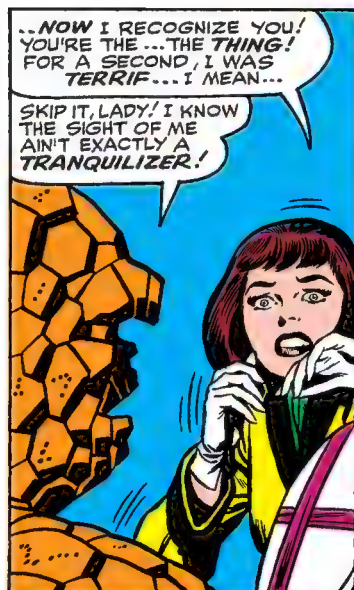
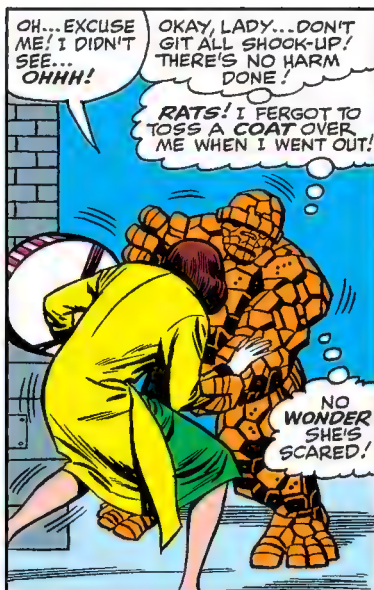
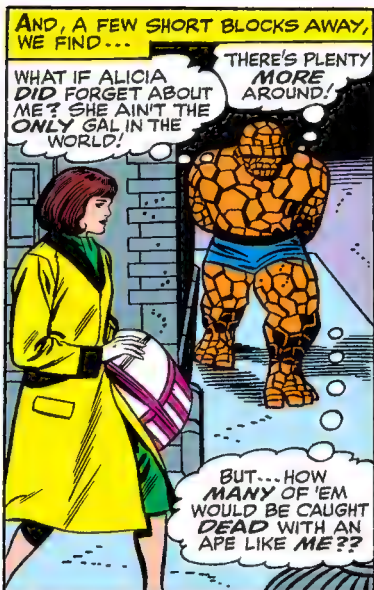
WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD **THAT** MAKE ? YOU WOULDN'T **KNOW** ABOUT IT FOR **WEEKS!** SOMETIMES I THINK YOU'VE EVEN FORGOTTEN THAT WE'RE **MARRIED NOW!**

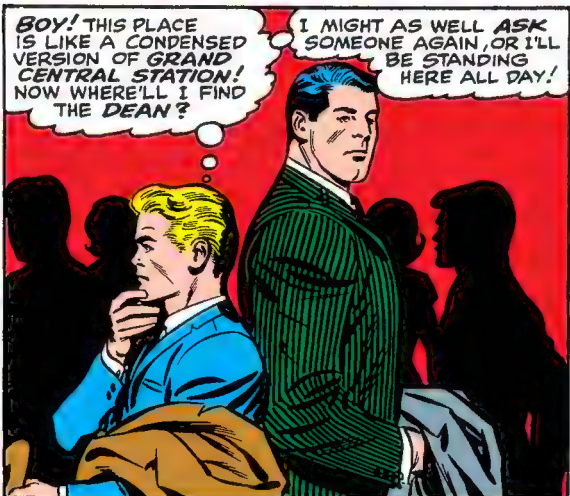
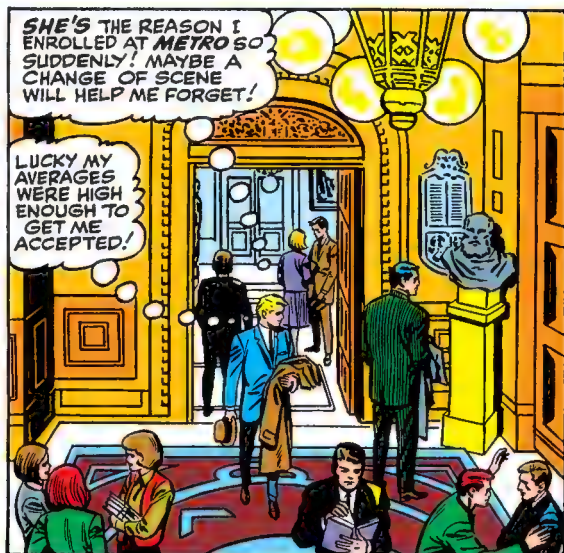
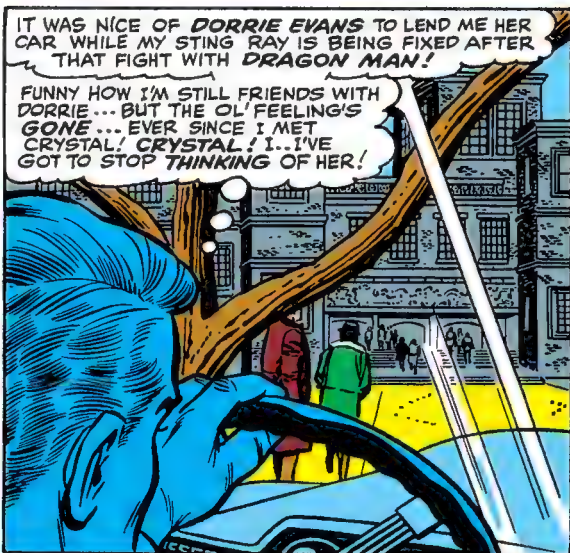
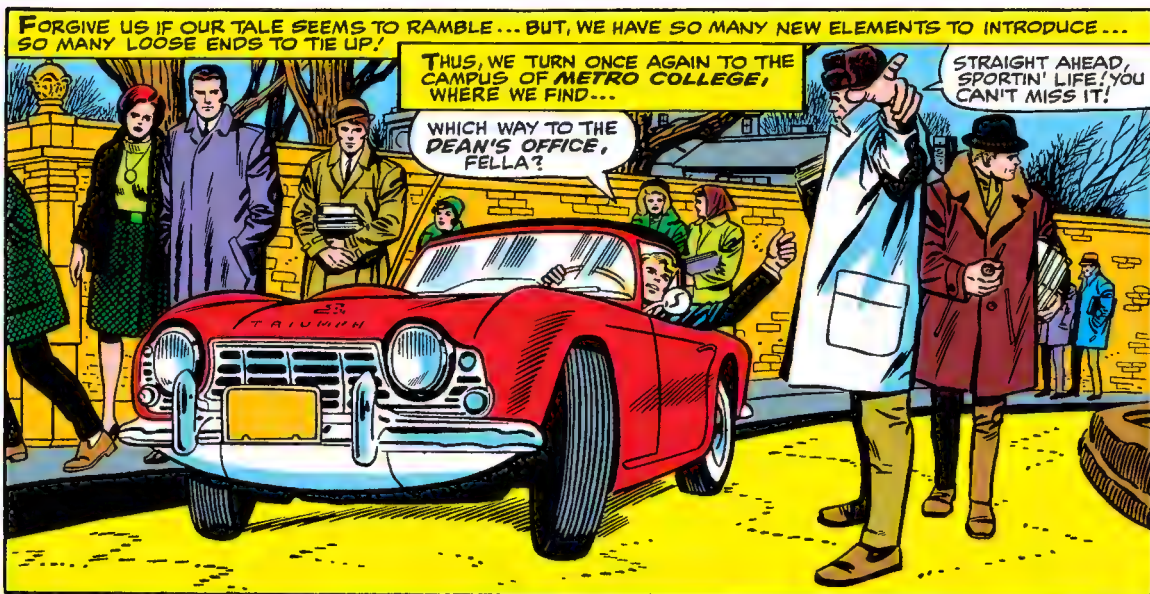


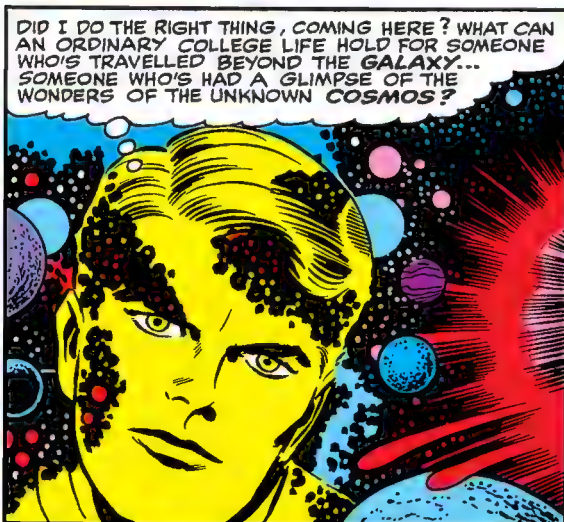
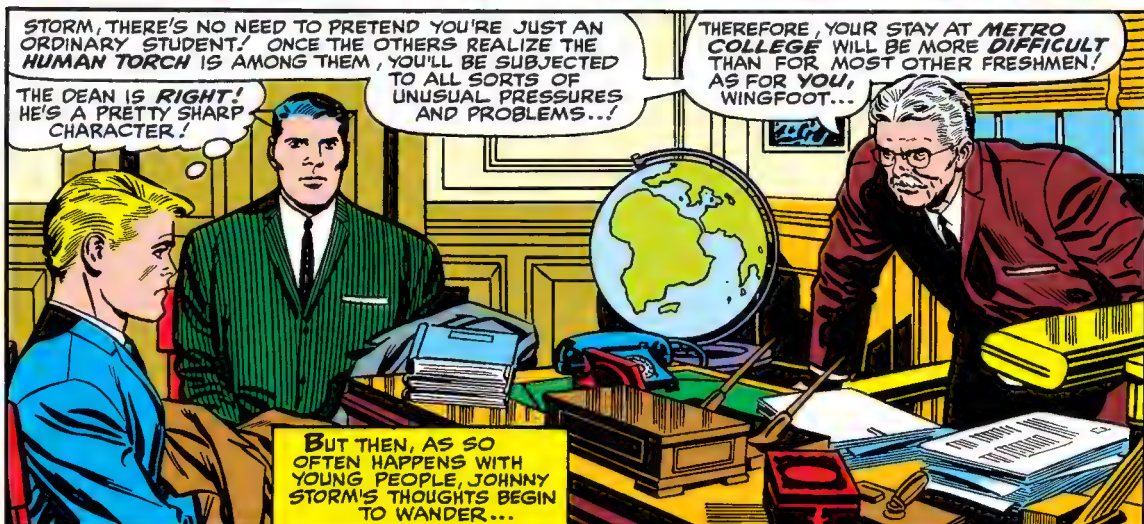
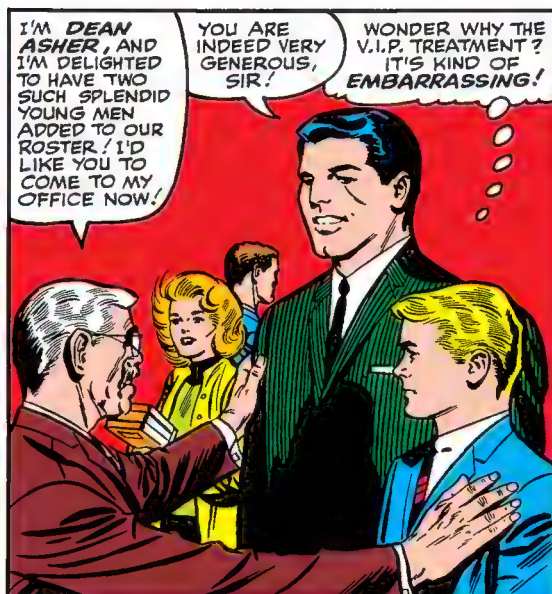
FORGIVE ME, DARLING! I SHOULDN'T HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU THAT WAY!

OF **COURSE** NOT! IF YOU HAD YOUR WAY, YOU'D PROBABLY **NEVER** SPEAK TO ME!

YOU'RE TOO BUSY TALKING TO THOSE **CRAZY TEST TUBES** OF YOURS!



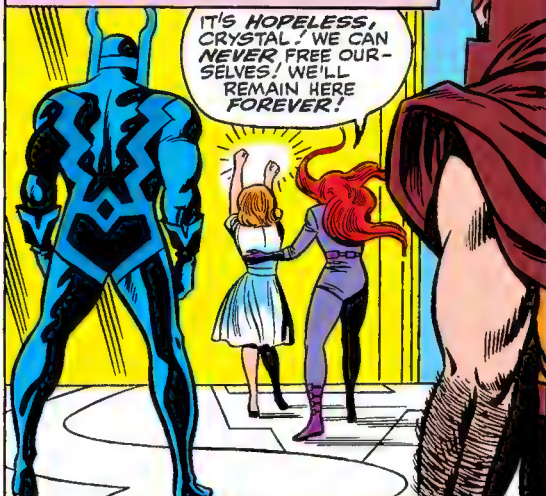




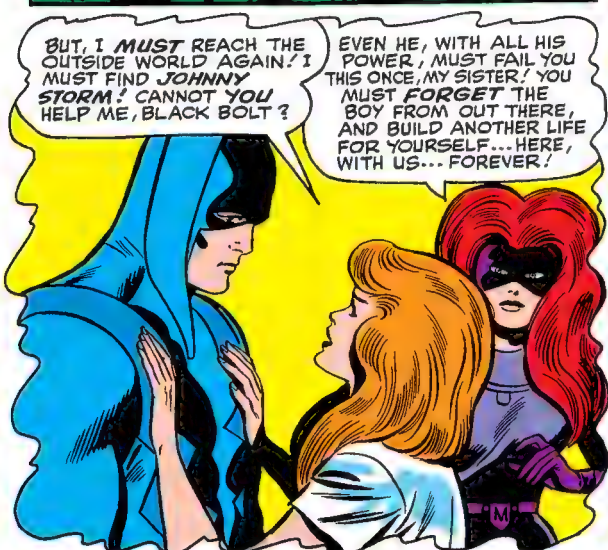


AND, MOST OF ALL, WILL I EVER BE ABLE TO KEEP MY THOUGHTS FROM RETURNING TO THAT HALF-BURIED DOME AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD... BENEATH WHICH AN ENTIRE RACE IS FOREVER IMPRISONED...??

"FOR, AMONG THAT RACE IS ONE SPECIAL GIRL... ONE INNOCENT, WARM-HEARTED CREATURE NAMED **CRYSTAL**... WHOM I'LL LOVE AS LONG AS I LIVE!"

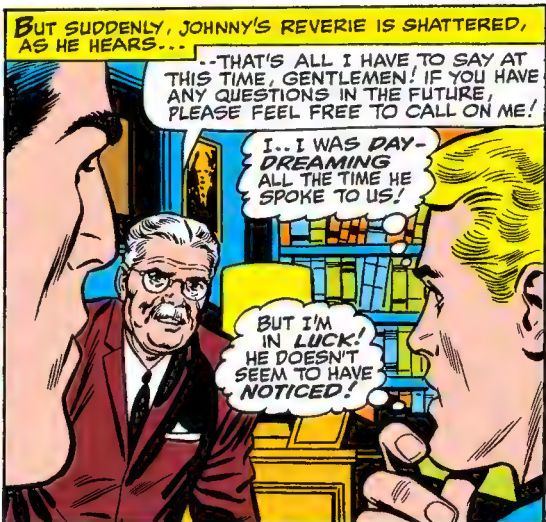


IT'S **HOPELESS**, **CRYSTAL**! WE CAN **NEVER** FREE OURSELVES! WE'LL REMAIN HERE **FOREVER**!



BUT, I **MUST** REACH THE OUTSIDE WORLD AGAIN! I MUST FIND **JOHNNY STORM**! CANNOT YOU HELP ME, **BLACK BOLT**?

EVEN HE, WITH ALL HIS POWER, MUST FAIL YOU THIS ONCE, MY SISTER! YOU MUST **FORGET** THE BOY FROM OUT THERE, AND BUILD ANOTHER LIFE FOR YOURSELF... HERE, WITH US... FOREVER!

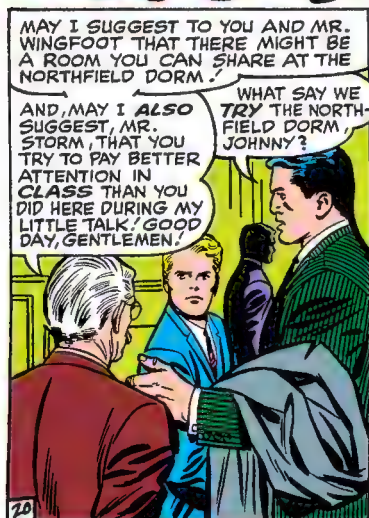


BUT SUDDENLY, **JOHNNY'S** REVERIE IS SHATTERED, AS HE HEARS...

--THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY AT THIS TIME, GENTLEMEN! IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL ON ME!

I... I WAS **DAY-DREAMING** ALL THE TIME HE SPOKE TO US!

BUT I'M IN **LUCK**! HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE **NOTICED**!



MAY I SUGGEST TO YOU AND MR. WINGFOOT THAT THERE MIGHT BE A ROOM YOU CAN SHARE AT THE NORTHFIELD DORM.

AND, MAY I **ALSO** SUGGEST, MR. **STORM**, THAT YOU TRY TO PAY BETTER ATTENTION IN **CLASS** THAN YOU DID HERE DURING MY LITTLE TALK! **GOOD DAY, GENTLEMEN!**

WHAT SAY WE **TRY** THE NORTH-FIELD DORM, **JOHNNY**?



AND SO, THE TWO NEW FRESHMEN HEAD FOR THE DORMITORY, SIDE-BY-SIDE, EACH OCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN PRIVATE THOUGHTS...

WISH I COULD RECALL WHAT THE DEAN SAID ABOUT **WING-FOOT**!



A STRANGE WAY TO END A TALE? PERHAPS! AND YET, PERHAPS IT IS THE **ONLY** WAY...

...FOR, AS THE TWO FIGURES SILENTLY FADE FROM SIGHT, WE KNOW FULL WELL THAT **DANGER** IS MOUNTING, A DANGER UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE EVER BEHELD BEFORE!

NEXT ISSUE...
A NEW **THING** JOINS THE F.F.!
TRULY A MARVEL SURPRISE EPIC!

FANTASTIC
FOUR
ANNUAL

72
BIG
PAGES

MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP 25¢

SPECIAL KING SIZE ANNUAL!

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
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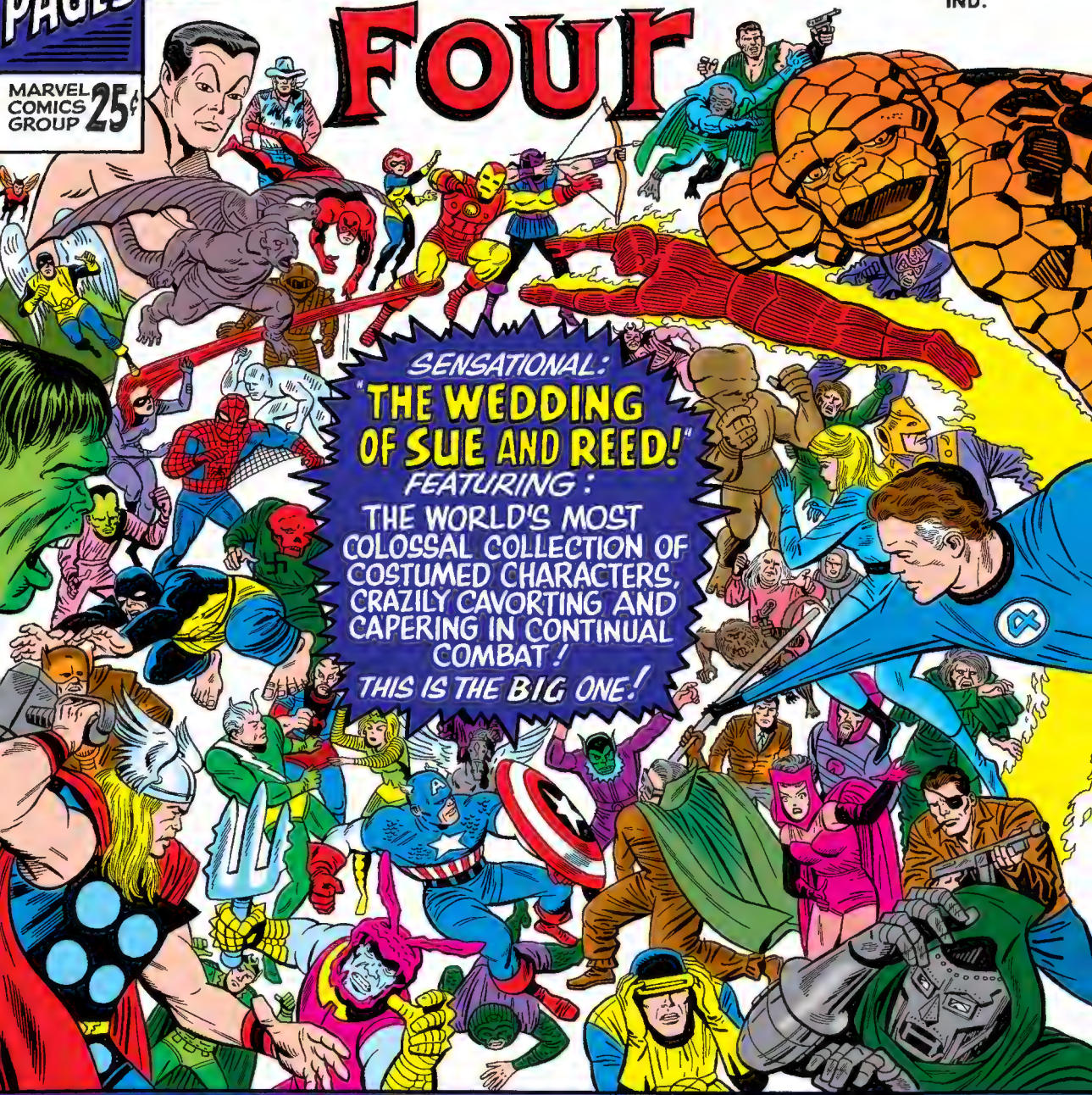


#3
1965

IND.

Fantastic FOUR

SENSATIONAL:
**"THE WEDDING
OF SUE AND REED!"**
FEATURING:
THE WORLD'S MOST
COLOSSAL COLLECTION OF
COSTUMED CHARACTERS,
CRAZILY CAVORTING AND
CAPERING IN CONTINUAL
COMBAT!
THIS IS THE BIG ONE!



ALSO

THE 2 MOST
REQUESTED F.F.
ISSUES SINCE #1!!
COMPLETE AND
UNABRIDGED!!

ISSUE #6:
FEATURING
SUB-MARINER
TEAMED UP WITH
DR. DOOM!

And

ISSUE #11:
"A VISIT WITH THE
FANTASTIC FOUR!"
and: **"THE
IMPOSSIBLE
MAN!"**

POSSIBLY
THE
GREATEST
ANNUAL
OF ALL
TIME!

THE FABULOUS F.F. HOLD A LONG-AWAITED WEDDING, ONLY TO FIND...

"BEDLAM

AT THE
BAXTER BUILDING!"

THE MOST
SENSATIONAL
SUPER-
SPECTACULAR
EVER WITNESSED
BY
HUMAN
EYES!!

WRITTEN BY.... STAN LEE
DRAWN BY..... JACK KIRBY
INKED BY..... VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED BY.... ARTIE SIMEK
CATERED BY.... THE BULLPEN
GANG!

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Date: 1964-65

TODAY'S THE DAY:
WEDDING BELLS
FOR
REED AND SUE!



IN A FORTIFIED CASTLE IN LATVERIA, THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH OF THAT TINY NATION TEARS A NEWSPAPER TO SHREDS IN A FIT OF UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE...

REED RICHARDS, THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD EVER TO DEFEAT ME, GETTING MARRIED TODAY!

THIS IS MY GREATEST CHANCE FOR REVENGE --NOW, WHEN HE WILL LEAST EXPECT IT!



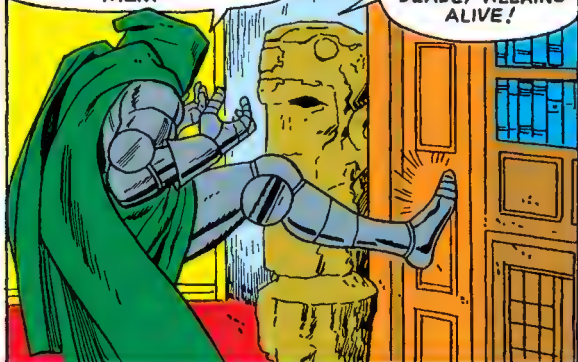
MY ATTACK MUST BE FOOLPROOF, IRRESISTIBLE, ALL-POWERFUL!

ONLY BY SCORING THE GREATEST VICTORY OF ALL TIME CAN I WIPE OUT THE HUMILIATION OF THE PAST!



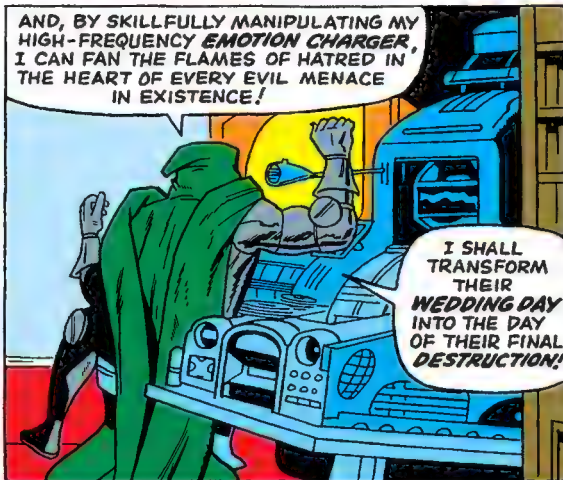
SINCE THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE THE GREATEST FIGHTING TEAM THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN, ONLY ONE THING WILL BE SURE TO DESTROY THEM--

AN EVEN GREATER TEAM OF SUPER-POWERED FOES! A VERITABLE ARMY OF THE MOST DEADLY VILLAINS ALIVE!



AND, BY SKILLFULLY MANIPULATING MY HIGH-FREQUENCY EMOTION CHARGER, I CAN FAN THE FLAMES OF HATRED IN THE HEART OF EVERY EVIL MENACE IN EXISTENCE!

I SHALL TRANSFORM THEIR WEDDING DAY INTO THE DAY OF THEIR FINAL DESTRUCTION!

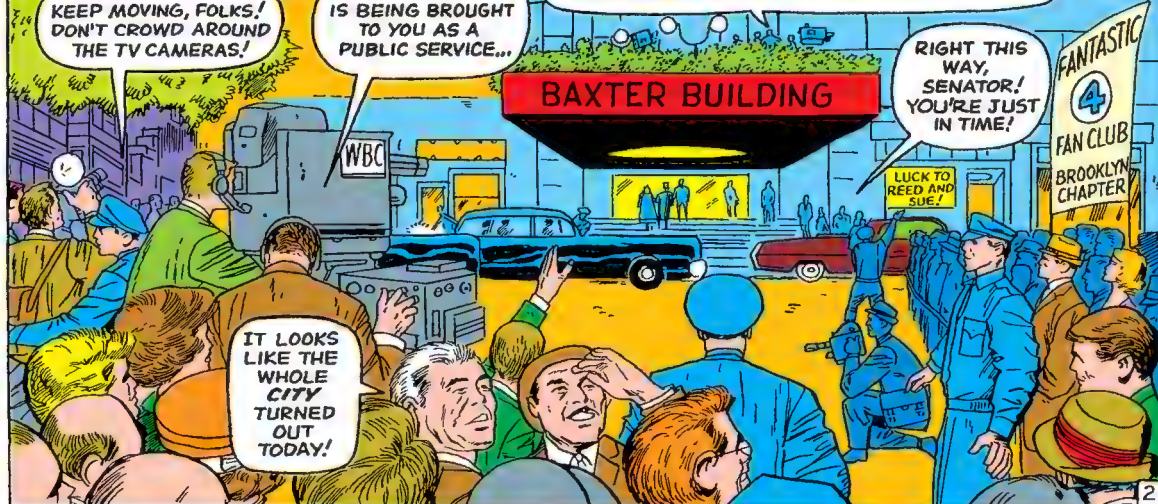


BUT, LET US LEAVE THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS ARCH-VILLAIN, AS WE SPAN THE OCEAN TO JOIN THE EXCITED CROWD MILLING IN FRONT OF THE BAXTER BUILDING--WAITING TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE COME FROM NEAR AND FAR TO ATTEND ONE OF THE MOST EAGERLY-AWAITED WEDDINGS IN HISTORY!

KEEP MOVING, FOLKS! DON'T CROWD AROUND THE TV CAMERAS!

THIS TELECAST IS BEING BROUGHT TO YOU AS A PUBLIC SERVICE...

GET ANOTHER PAN SHOT OF THE CROWDS, CHARLIE!



PERSONAL NOTE FROM STAN AND JACK:
IF YOU'RE A NAME-DROPPER, YOU'RE REALLY GONNA HAVE A BALL NOW! READY? HERE WE GO....!

HIYA, STARK! SAY! I THOUGHT THEY ONLY WORE THEM HATS IN **CARTOONS** WHERE KIDS TOSS SNOWBALLS AT RICH GEEZERS!

I THOUGHT I'D GET IT OUT OF MOTHBALLS FOR THIS OCCASION!

WHY THANK YOU, MR. ~~THE~~ **THING**!

WOW! YA SURE DIDN'T FIND **HER** IN NO PILE OF MOTHBALLS, CHUM!

OH, **HEDY**! ISN'T **TONY STARK** THE **ABSOLUTE LIVING END** !!!

YOU **KNOW** IT, **PATSY**! BUT LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND **MILLIE THE MODEL**! I HEARD SHE HAD AN INVITATION!

WE WANT **IRVING FORBUSH**! WE WANT **IRVING FORBUSH**!

MERRY MARCHIN

BUT, COMPLETELY UNNOTICED IN THE MILLING THROG, THE PARANOIAC PUPPET MASTER CLUTCHES A SMALL, LIFELIKE FIGURE...

THIS IS THE CHANCE I'VE BEEN **WAITING** FOR! NO ONE WILL SUSPECT THAT THE **NEXT GUEST** WILL BE UNDER **MY** CONTROL!

THIS MUST BE ANOTHER **V.I.P.**! THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE IN THEM MONKEY SUITS!

I MIGHT AS WELL SHAKE HANDS WITH 'IM! HE CAN BRAG ABOUT IT FER THE REST OF HIS LIFE!

STOP! HOLD IT! DON'T TOUCH HIS HAND!!

GOOD WORK, YOU GUYS! LUCKY WE GOT TO 'IM IN TIME!

HEY! WHAT IN **SAM HILL'S** GOIN' ON HERE??

THIS'LL PUT HIM OUT OF ACTION FOR A WHILE, **COL. FURY**!

SHIELD'S HIDDEN BRAIN-WAVE CAMERA TOOK THIS PICTURE OF THAT GUY'S HEAD! SEE THESE TWO MENTAL PATTERNS?

IT MEANS ANOTHER MIND WAS **CONTROLLING** 'IM!

WELL, WADDAYA KNOW?!!

IF NOT FOR FURY'S AGENTS THE **THING** WOULD HAVE SHAKEN MY SUBJECT'S HAND, AND WOULD HAVE BEEN INJECTED WITH ENOUGH **POISON** TO KILL HIM ON THE SPOT!

I HAD SWORN NEVER TO ATTACK THE FANTASTIC FOUR AGAIN--AND YET, SOMETHING SEEMED TO **FORCE** ME TO DO IT, ALMOST AS IF SOMEONE IS ACTUALLY CONTROLLING **ME!***

* THAT "SOMEONE" IS **DOCTOR DOOM**, ALTHOUGH THE **PUPPET MASTER** WILL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW IT! -- STAN.

BUT, I FEEL AN AURA OF **EVIL** IN THE AIR ALL ABOUT ME-- AS THOUGH SOME POWERFUL **SINISTER FORCE** IS SECRETLY AT WORK!

SOME FORCE WHICH WILL MAKE **OTHERS** ATTACK THE F.F.-- UNTIL THEY'RE FINALLY **DESTROYED!**

AHH! THE COAST IS CLEAR NOW, MY THREE BEAUTIES!

AND SO, THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE **RED GHOST** AND HIS **SUPER APES** TO FINISH THE JOB THEY'D BEGUN MANY MONTHS AGO!

THE JOB OF **ANNIHILATING** THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

MEANWHILE, IN THE LUXURIOUS LOBBY OF THE BAXTER BUILDING...

IS SOMETHING **WRONG**, MR. GRIMM?

YOU BETCHER **LIFE!** I GOTTA WARN STRETCHO THAT SOMEONE'S OUT TO **CLOBBER** US TODAY!

AWW, I CAN'T DO IT! IT'S HIS **BLAMED WEDDIN' DAY!** I DON'T WANNA SPOIL IT BY **WORRYIN'** THE TWO OF 'EM!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TA BE A BIG BRAIN-- WADDA **YOU** THINK I OUGHTTA DO, PROFESSOR?

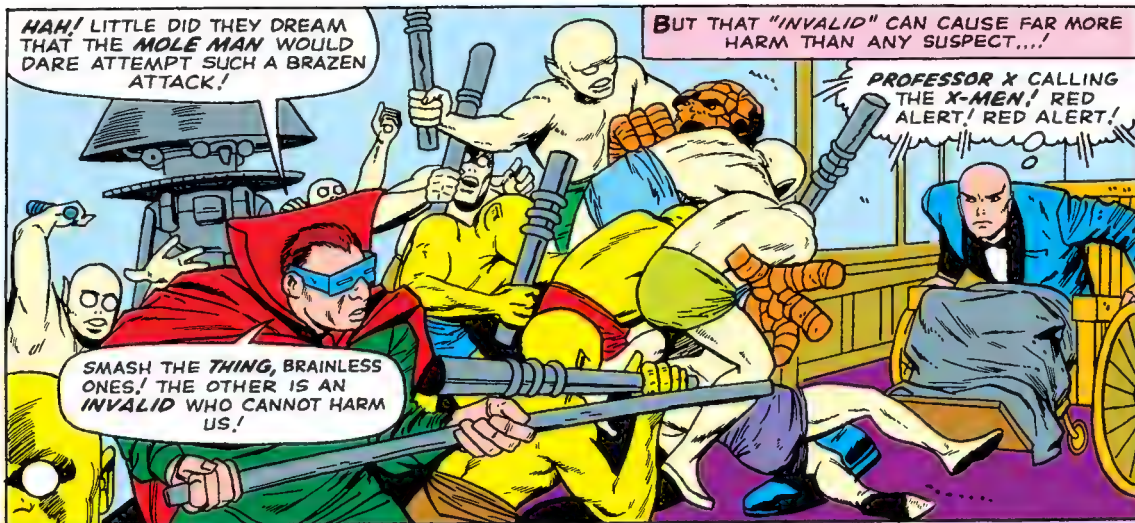
BE ON GUARD, MY FRIEND!

MY MUTANT BRAIN SENSES DANGER EVEN NOW!

AND, AT THAT MOMENT...

LOOK! A **DRILL!** BORING THRU THE FLOOR OF THE LOBBY!

GIT BACK, PROFESSOR! IF IT'S WHAT I **THINK** IT IS--!!



HAH! LITTLE DID THEY DREAM THAT THE MOLE MAN WOULD DARE ATTEMPT SUCH A BRAZEN ATTACK!

BUT THAT "INVALID" CAN CAUSE FAR MORE HARM THAN ANY SUSPECT....!

PROFESSOR X CALLING THE X-MEN! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT!

SMASH THE THING, BRAINLESS ONES! THE OTHER IS AN INVALID WHO CANNOT HARM US!

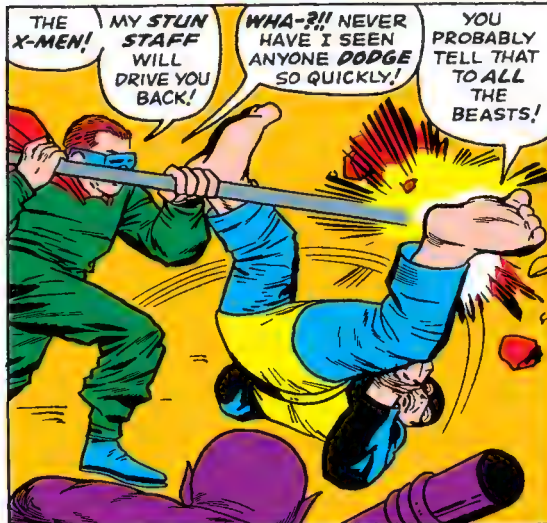


HURRY! THE PROFESSOR NEEDS US!

BUT, WHO'D DARE THREATEN US NOW?

WHOEVER IT IS, THE X-MEN WILL HANDLE 'IM! THAT'S FOR SURE, ANGEL!

FASTER, ALL! MERE LOQUACIOUSNESS CANNOT VANQUISH AN ADVERSARY!



THE X-MEN!

MY STUN STAFF WILL DRIVE YOU BACK!

WHA-?! NEVER HAVE I SEEN ANYONE DODGE SO QUICKLY!

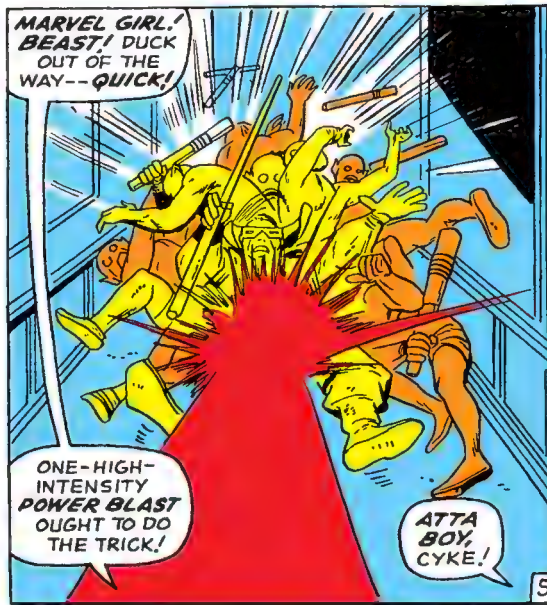
YOU PROBABLY TELL THAT TO ALL THE BEASTS!



I'LL KEEP HIM OFF-BALANCE TELEKINETICALLY, WHILE WE FORM A BATTLE PLAN!

FAR BE IT FROM ME TO INTERFERE, LOVELY LADY!

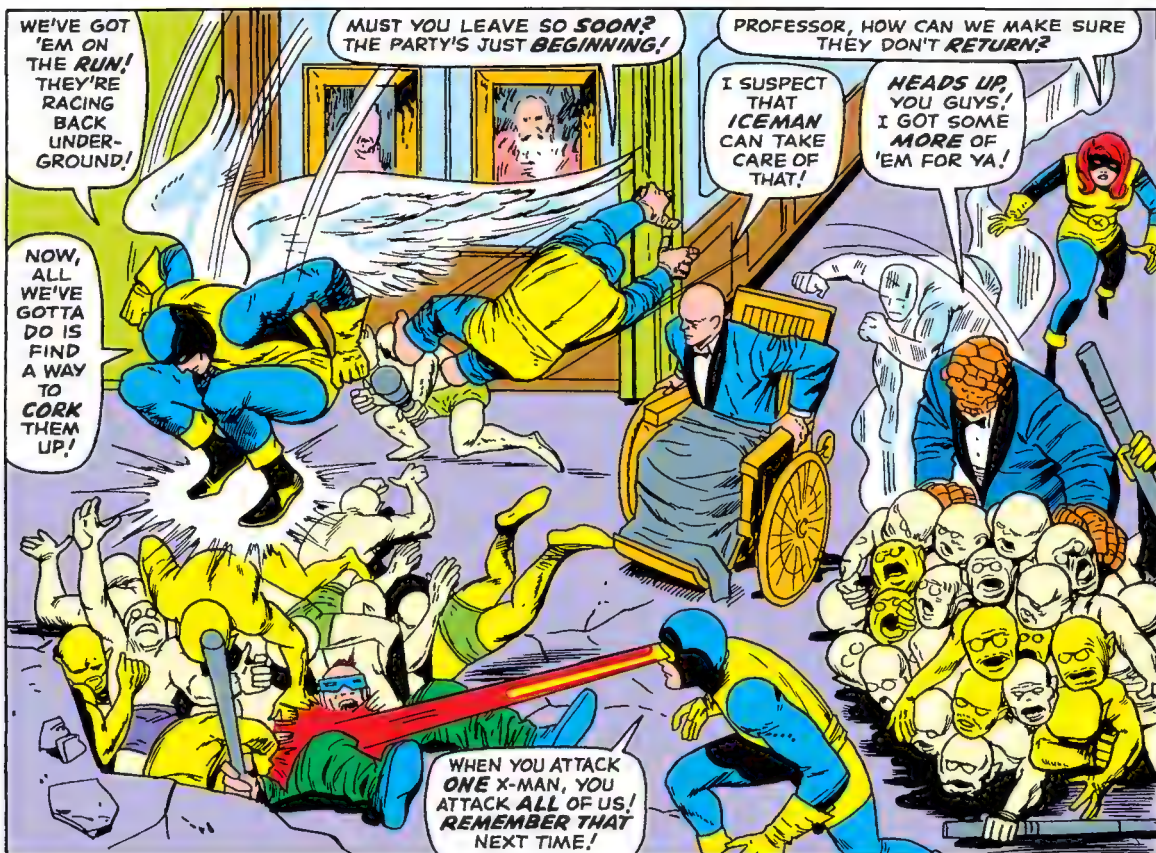
I'VE GOT TO STOP THOSE CHARGING SUBTERRANEANS!

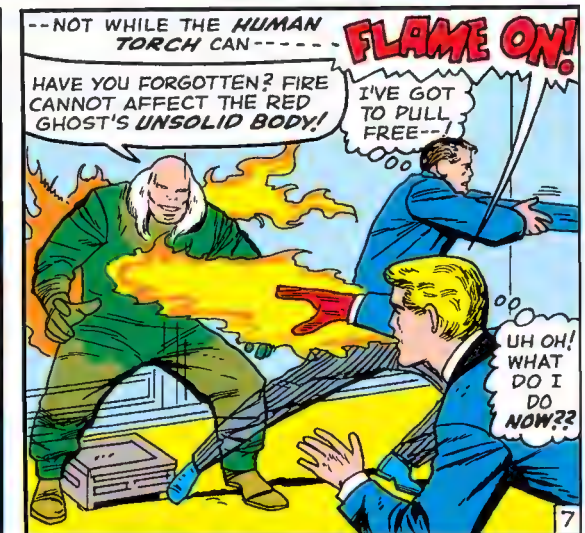
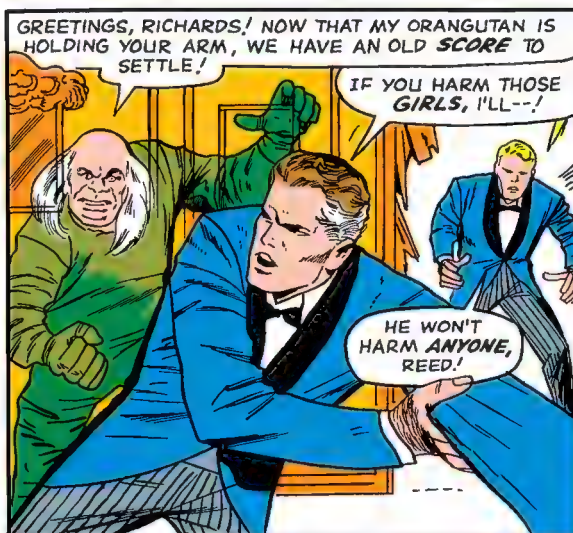
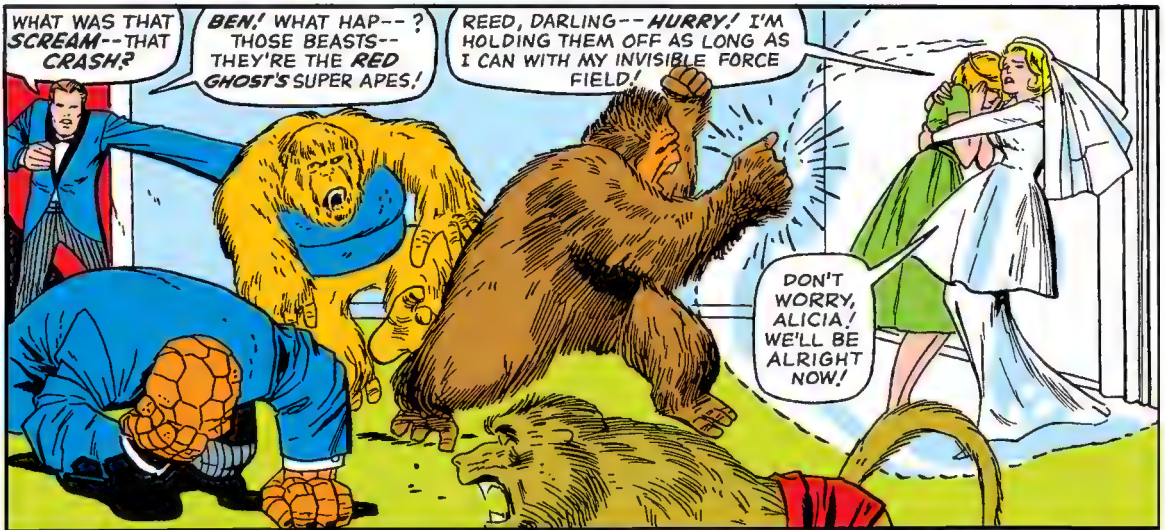
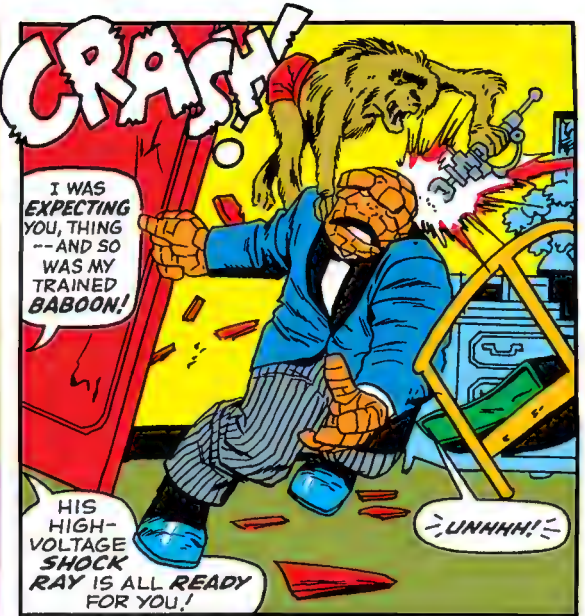


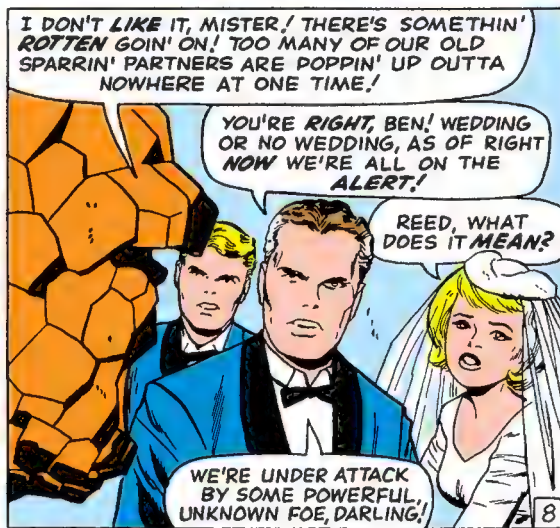
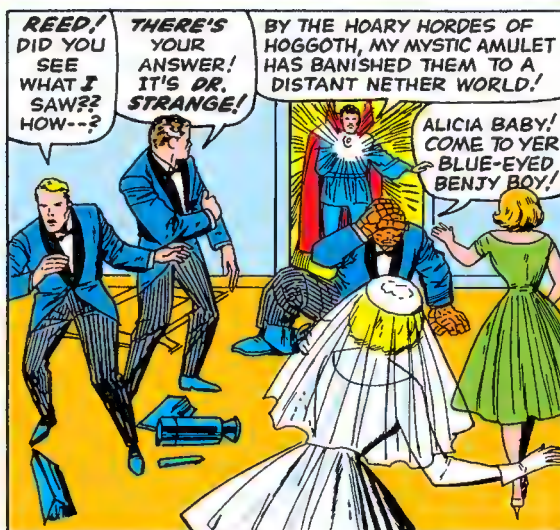
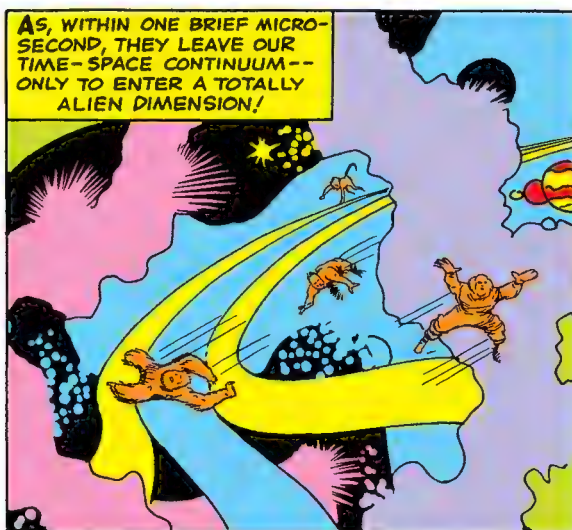
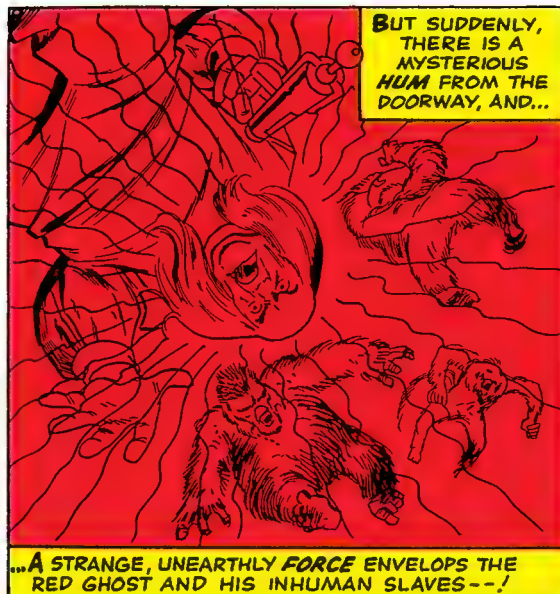
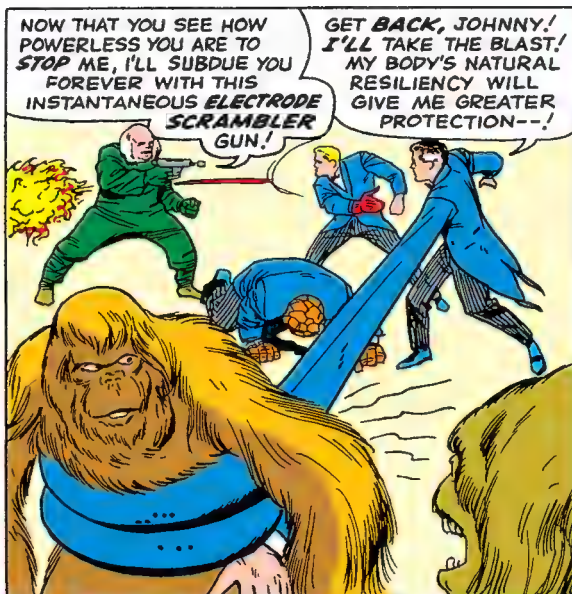
MARVEL GIRL! BEAST! DUCK OUT OF THE WAY-- QUICK!

ONE-HIGH-INTENSITY POWER BLAST OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK!

ATTA BOY, CYKE!







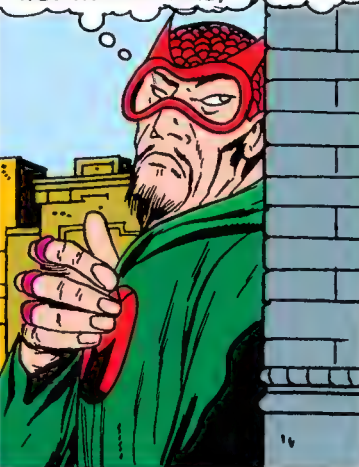
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN LATVERIA, THE FOE WHOM REED REFERS TO SMILES A SINISTER, TRIUMPHANT SMILE--!



IT'S DONE! MY EMOTION MACHINE HAS CAUSED THE MOST DEADLY ARRAY OF EVIL-DOERS EVER ASSEMBLED TO CONVERGE UPON THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

THEN, AS IF TO PROVE THE TRUTH OF DR. DOOM'S WORDS...

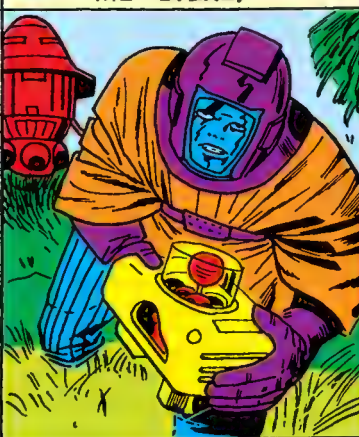
SOME INNER VOICE SAID TO ME THAT THE MANDARIN MUST NOT MISS THE WEDDING!



AND, IT SEEMS THAT THE SAME "INNER VOICE" HAS WHISPERED TO MANY OTHER FAMILIAR FIGURES, AS WELL...



EMISSARIES OF EVIL FROM OUT OF THE PAST--THE PRESENT--AND, IN ONE INSTANCE, EVEN THE FUTURE!



SOME WHOM YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN-- SOME WHOM YOU MAY HAVE MISSED--

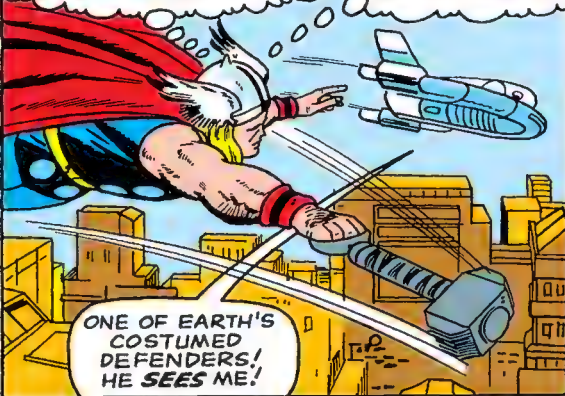


AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT ENEMIES OTHER THAN THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- BUT STAND READY TO BATTLE THE F.F. NOW!



BUT, LUCKILY, NOT ALL WHO HEAD FOR THE BAXTER BUILDING ARE CREATURES OF EVIL--

THAT STRANGE CRAFT IS LIKE NONE I HAVE EVER BEHELD ON EARTH!



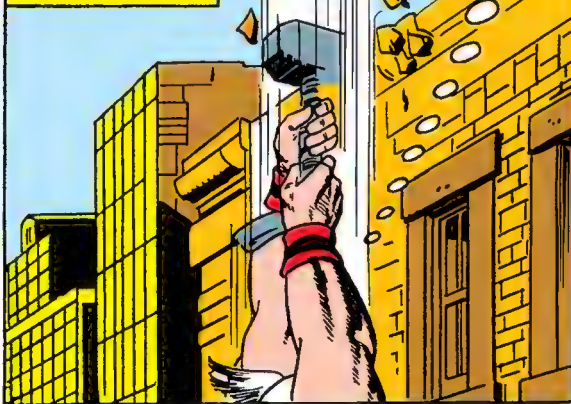
AND HE WHO PILOTS IT IS NO HUMAN BEING!

ONE OF EARTH'S COSTUMED DEFENDERS! HE SEES ME!

HE MUST BE DESTROYED! THIS TIME NONE SHALL STOP THE SUPER SKRULL FROM DEFEATING THE ACCURSED FANTASTIC FOUR!

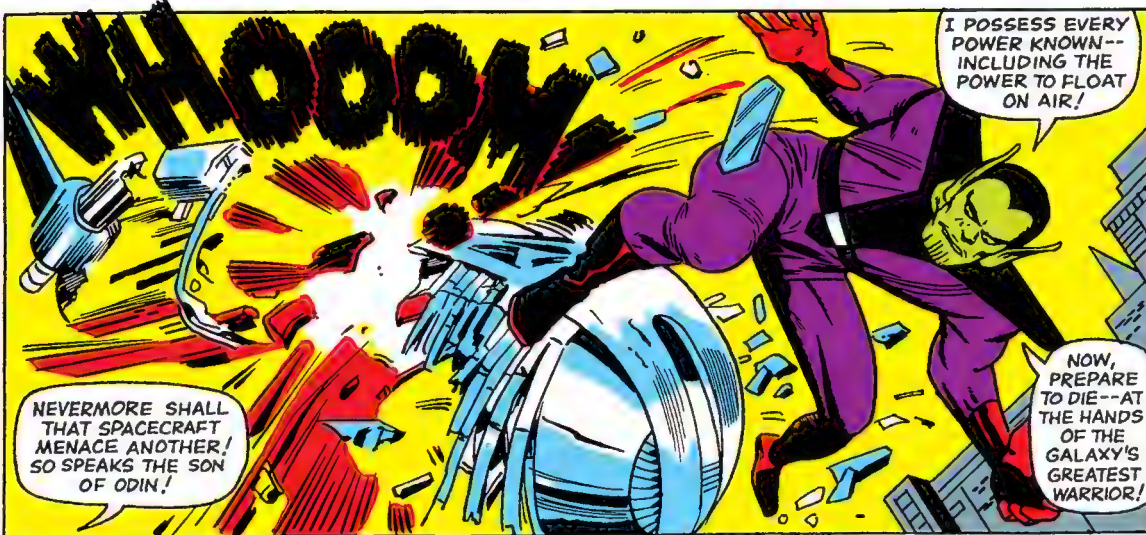


TEMPORARILY STUNNED BY THE SUDDEN BLAST ATTACK, THE MIGHTY **THOR** PLUMMETS EARTHWARD, BUT-- AT THE LAST MINUTE--



I'LL BREAK MY FALL BY CATCHING MY HAMMER UPON THIS ROOF EDGE!

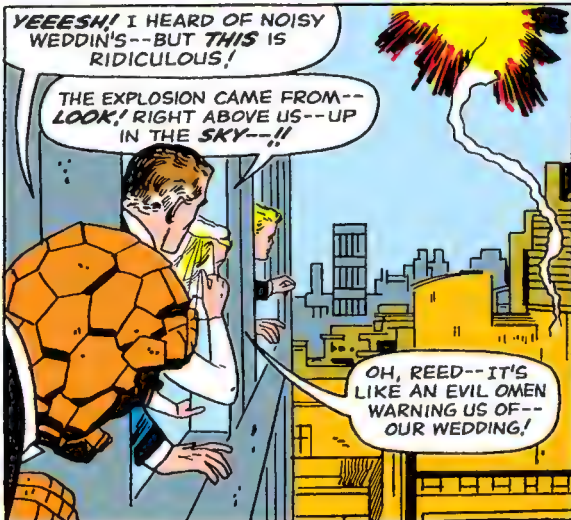
AND NOW, WHOEVER MY CALLOUS ATTACKER MAY BE, HE WILL FEEL THE AWESOME WRATH OF A VENGEFUL **THUNDER GOD!**



I POSSESS EVERY POWER KNOWN-- INCLUDING THE POWER TO FLOAT ON AIR!

NEVERMORE SHALL THAT SPACECRAFT MENACE ANOTHER! SO SPEAKS THE SON OF ODIN!

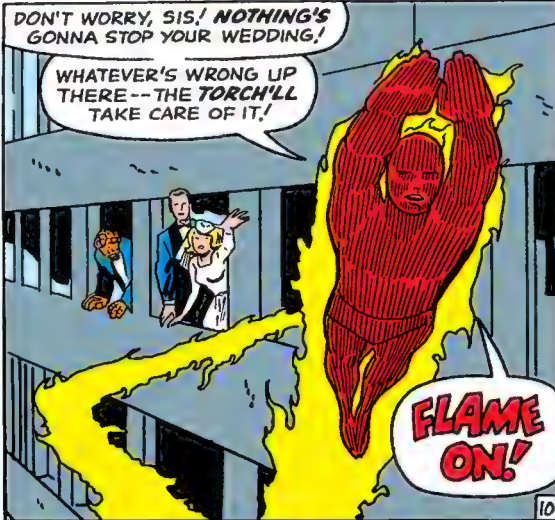
NOW, PREPARE TO DIE--AT THE HANDS OF THE GALAXY'S GREATEST WARRIOR!



YEEESH! I HEARD OF NOISY WEDDIN'S--BUT **THIS** IS RIDICULOUS!

THE EXPLOSION CAME FROM-- **LOOK!** RIGHT ABOVE US--UP IN THE **SKY**--!!

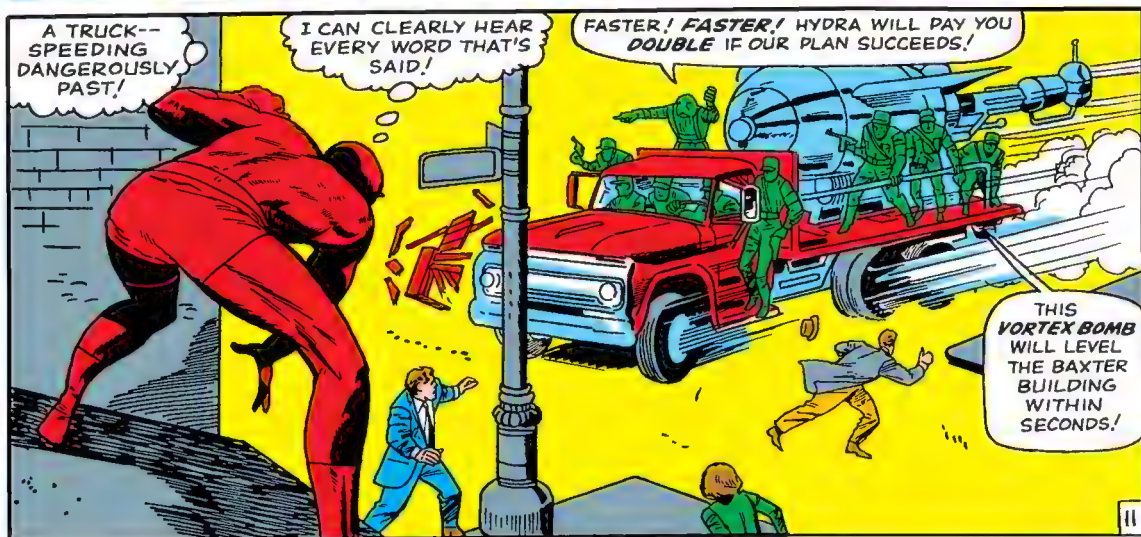
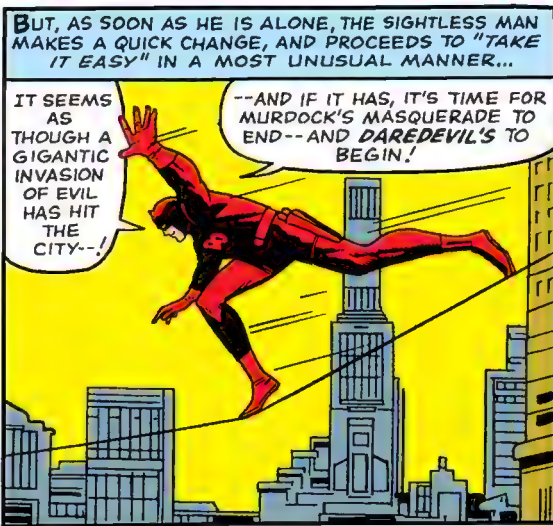
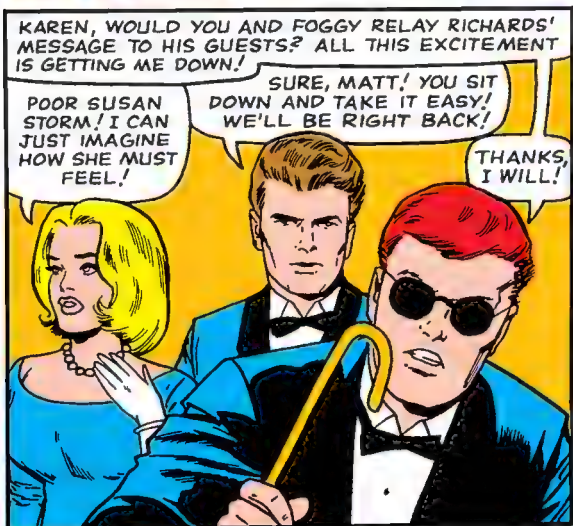
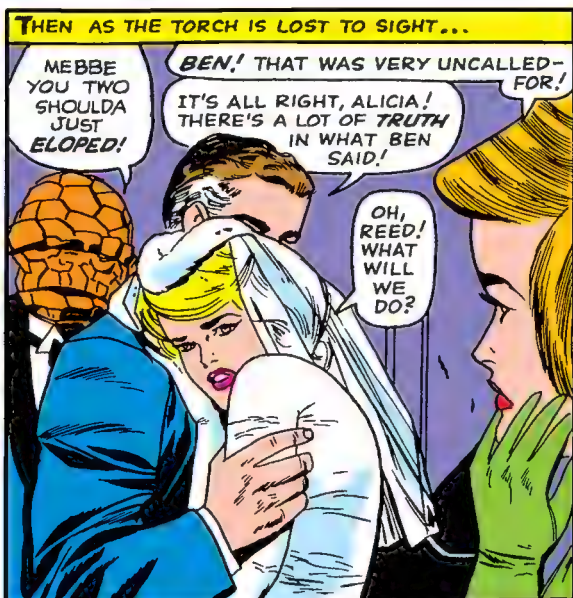
OH, REED--IT'S LIKE AN EVIL OMEN WARNING US OF-- OUR WEDDING!

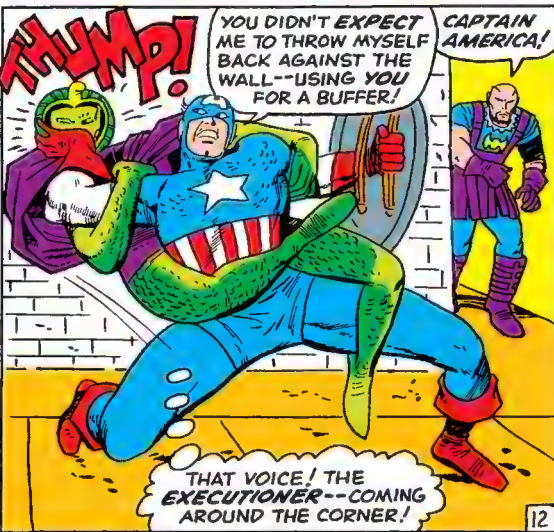
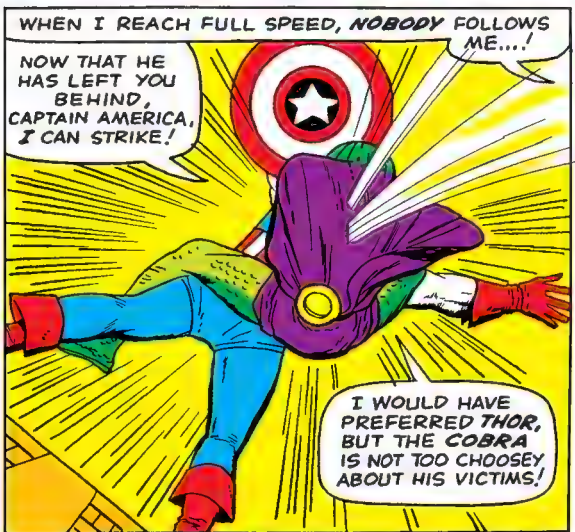
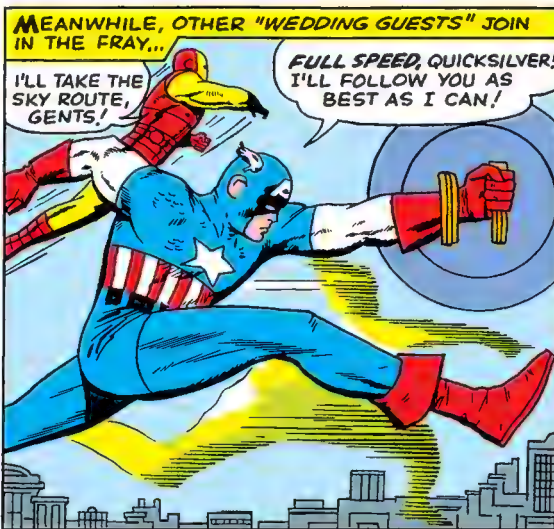


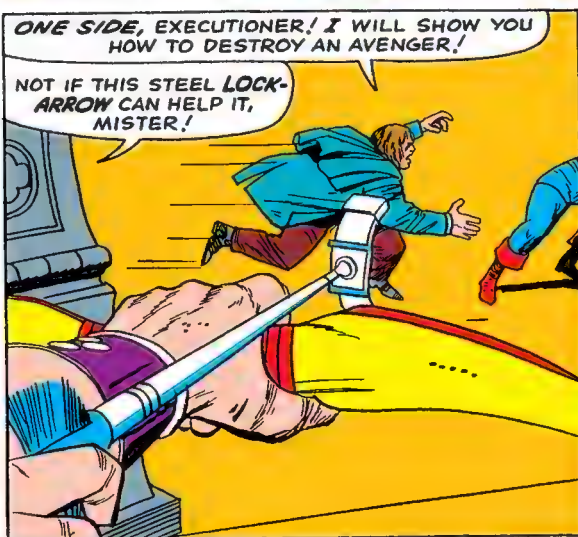
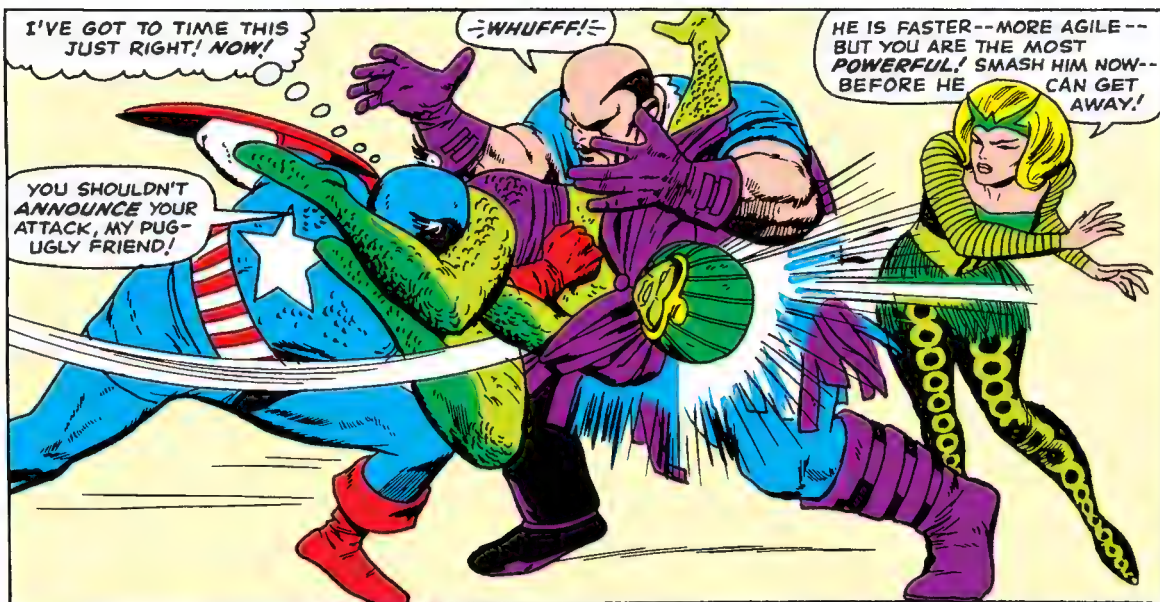
DON'T WORRY, SIS! **NOTHING'S** GONNA STOP YOUR WEDDING!

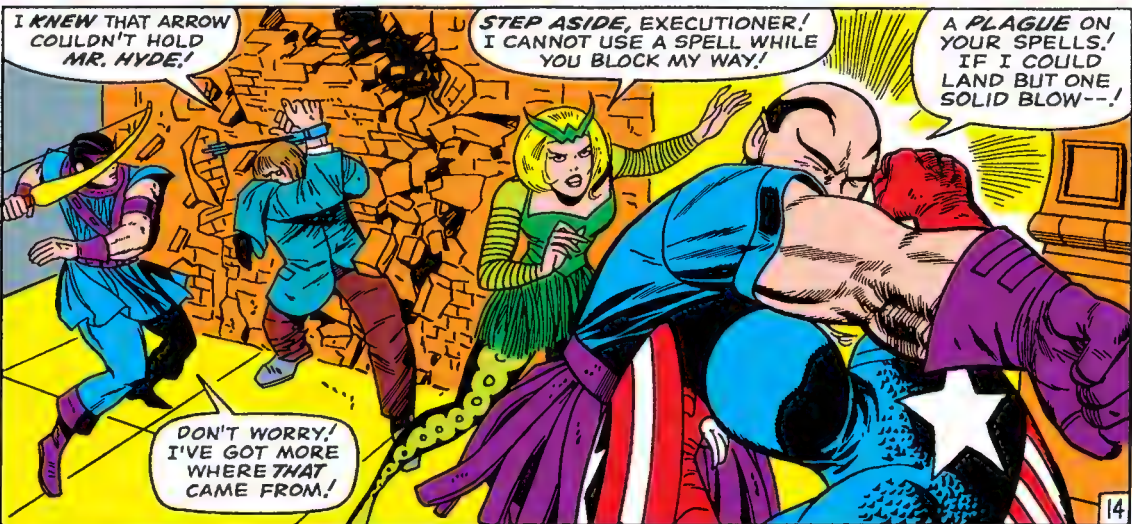
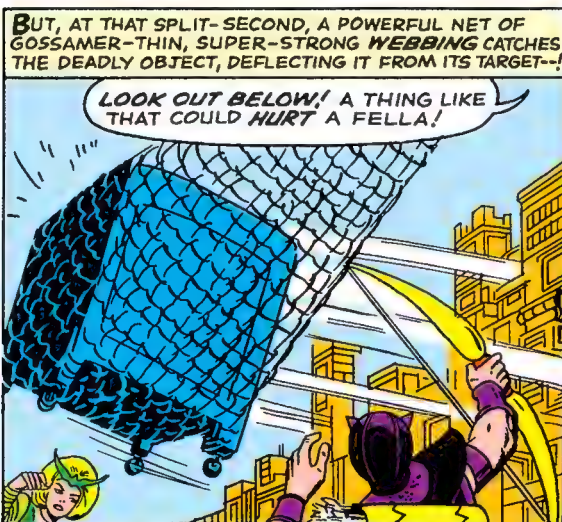
WHATEVER'S WRONG UP THERE--THE **TORCH**'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!

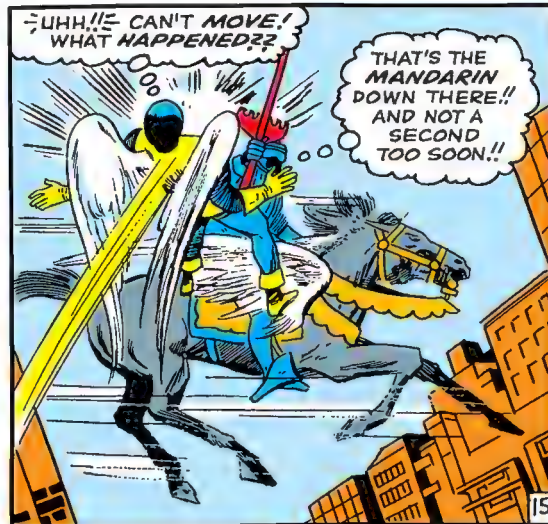
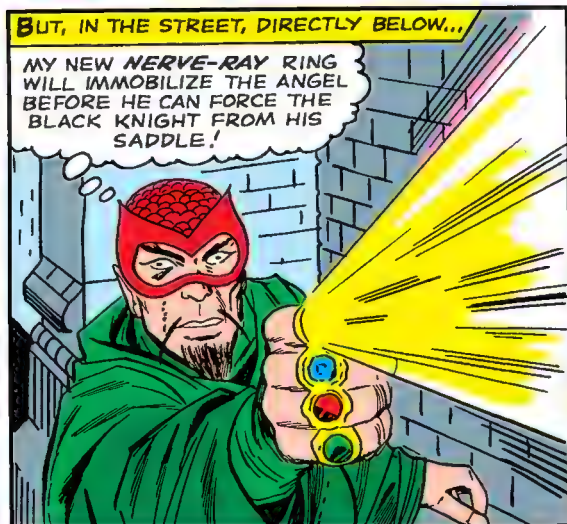
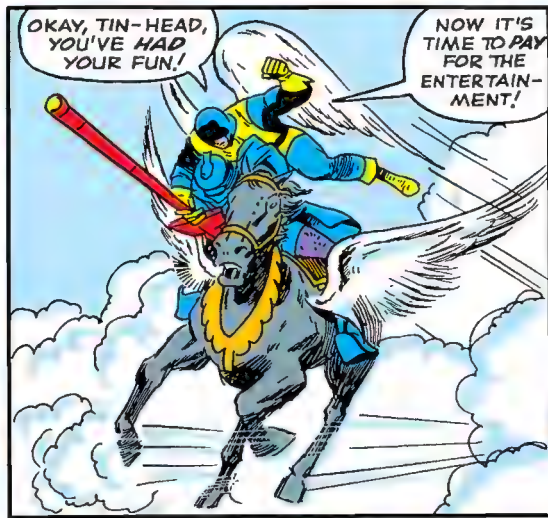
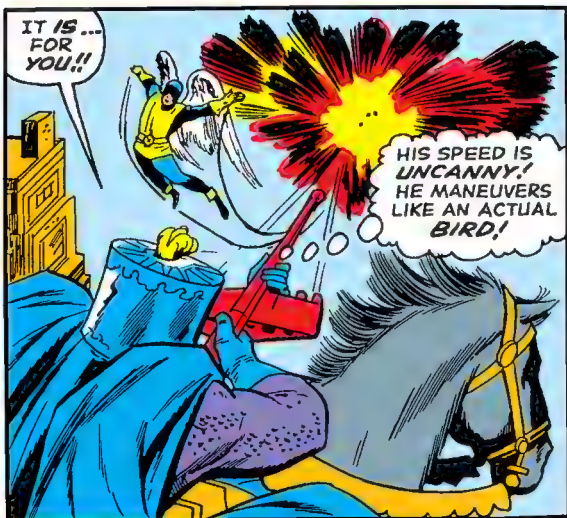
FLAME ON!





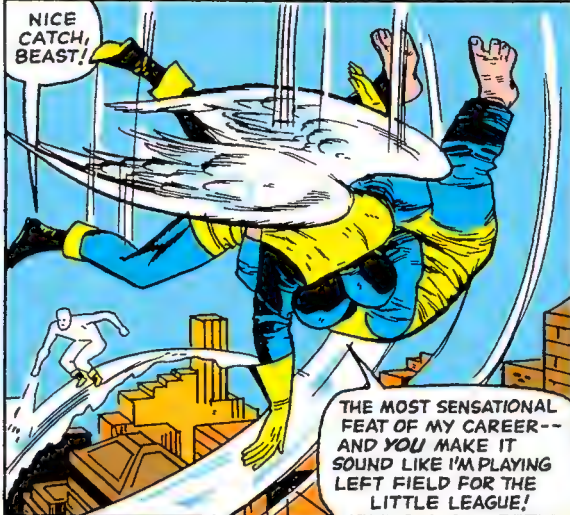






BUT, BEFORE THE TEMPORARILY-PARALYZED ANGEL CAN FALL TO EARTH...

NICE CATCH, BEAST!



THE MOST SENSATIONAL FEAT OF MY CAREER-- AND YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I'M PLAYING LEFT FIELD FOR THE LITTLE LEAGUE!

WE'LL SWAP PRAISES LATER! RIGHT NOW THERE'S A RUGGED RECEPTION COMMITTEE WAITING FOR US BELOW!

MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO SCATTER 'EM BY BOWLING THEM OVER WITH A HEAVY ICE MISSILE--!



TARRY WITH THEM AS YOU WILL, MY FRIGID FRIEND, WHILE I SEEK SANCTUARY FOR OUR FALLEN EAGLE!

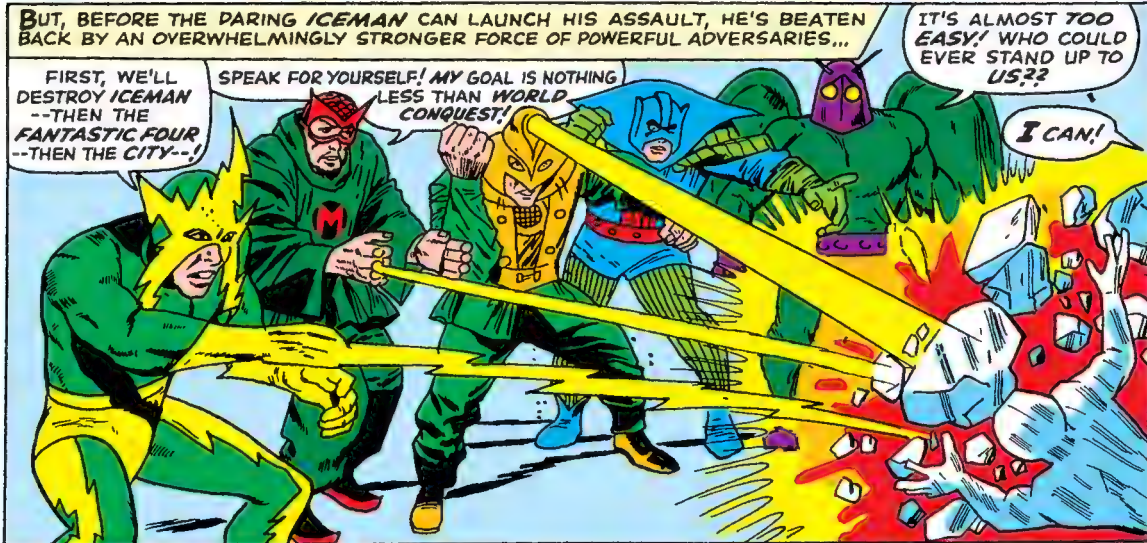
BUT, BEFORE THE PARING ICEMAN CAN LAUNCH HIS ASSAULT, HE'S BEATEN BACK BY AN OVERWHELMINGLY STRONGER FORCE OF POWERFUL ADVERSARIES...

FIRST, WE'LL DESTROY ICEMAN --THEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR --THEN THE CITY--!

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF! MY GOAL IS NOTHING LESS THAN WORLD CONQUEST!

IT'S ALMOST TOO EASY! WHO COULD EVER STAND UP TO US??

I CAN!



CYCLOPS! BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!

GET AROUND THAT CORNER! SHIELD YOUR EYES! ONLY A HIGH-INTENSITY BLAST CAN STOP THEM!



BUT, AS CYCLOPS' AWESOME FULL-STRENGTH POWER BLAST IS UNLEASHED, IT STRIKES THE CONCERTED ENERGY OF THE OTHER RAYS, CAUSING A SHATTERING CONCUSSION...



BUT, BY THE TIME THE SMOKE CLEARS, ALMOST EVERY SUPER-POWERED COMBATANT IN THE AREA HAS HEARD THE EXPLOSION, AND THE TWO OPPOSING FORCES CONVERGE UPON THE SPOT, IN THE GREATEST BATTLE ROYAL EVER RECORDED WITHIN HUMAN MEMORY--!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

FLAME ON!

THEY MUST BE STOPPED OUT HERE! THEY MUSTN'T GET TO THE BAXTER BUILDING WHERE SUE AND ALICIA ARE!

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

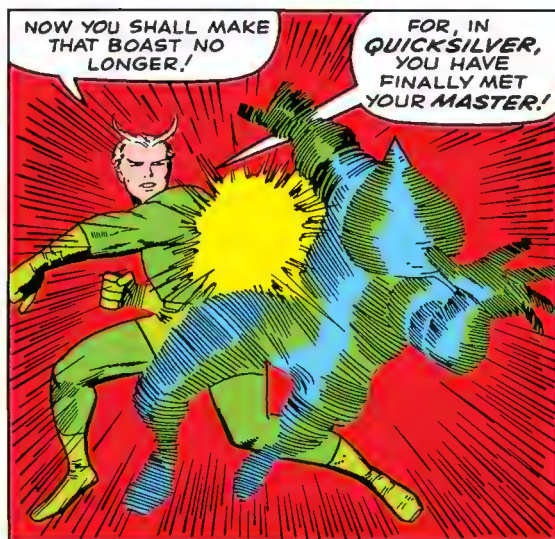
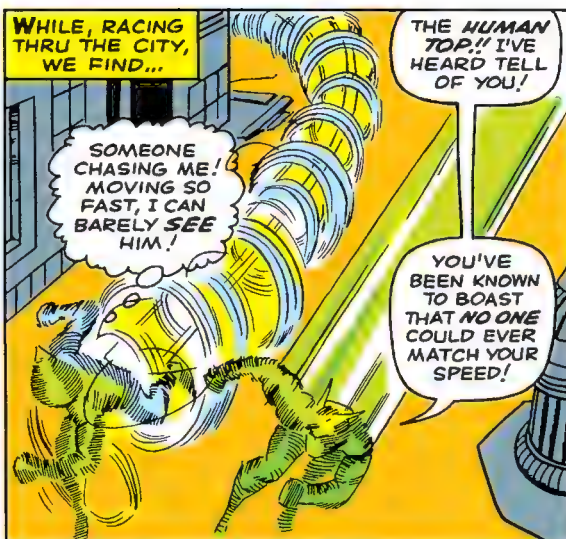
SUDDENLY, THE SHARP-EYED **IRON MAN** SEES A MONSTROUS NEW MENACE ENTERING THE SCENE...

THE **MAD THINKER** AND HIS AWESOME **ANDROID!** I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE HURLS HIMSELF INTO THE FIGHT!

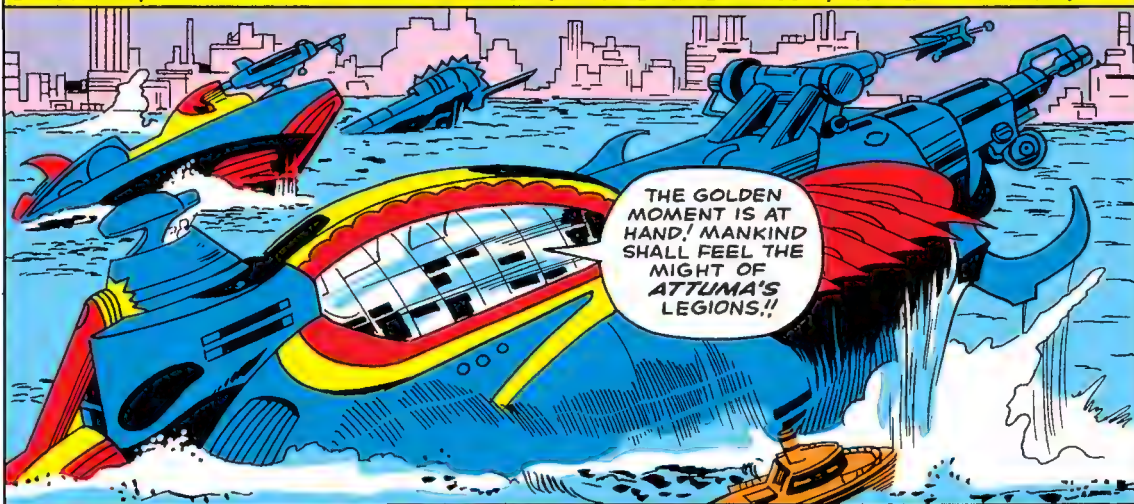
MY **ANDROID** CAN CHANGE HIS BODY STRUCTURE TO MATCH ANY FOE! WATCH HIM BECOME A CREATURE OF **STEEL** --MANY TIMES YOUR EQUAL!!

IT TAKES MORE THAN A METAL SHELL TO BEAT ME, LONG HAIR! **NOTHING** CAN MATCH MY POWER TRANSISTORS--LEAST OF ALL THAT OVERGROWN LUMP OF SILLY PUTTY!

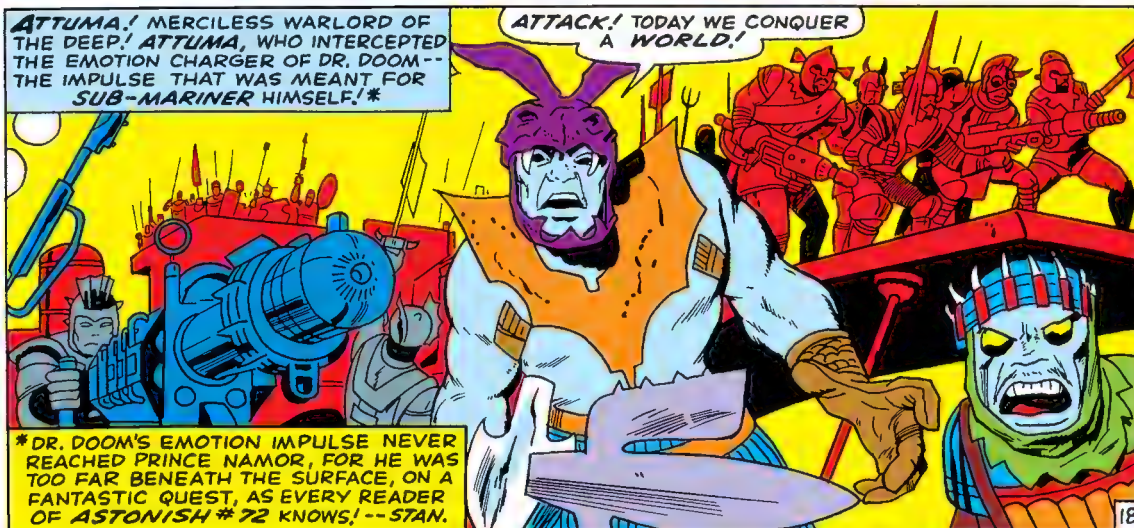
DON'T RUN OFF SO SOON, FRIEND! I DON'T INTEND TO IGNORE YOU, EITHER!



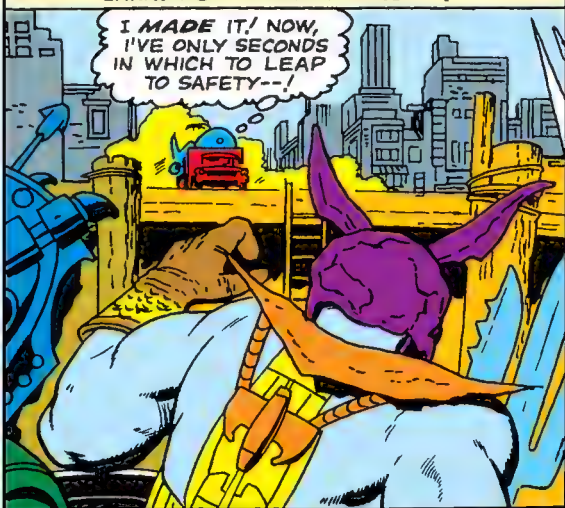
BUT, AT THAT INSTANT, THE GREATEST DANGER OF ALL RISES AWESOMELY OUT OF THE WATERS SURROUNDING THE VAST METROPOLIS -- THE SPRAWLING CITY WHOSE MIDTOWN AREA HAS BEEN EVACUATED, SAVE FOR THE COLORFUL HORDES BATTLING RELENTLESSLY, AS WE HAVE SEEN!



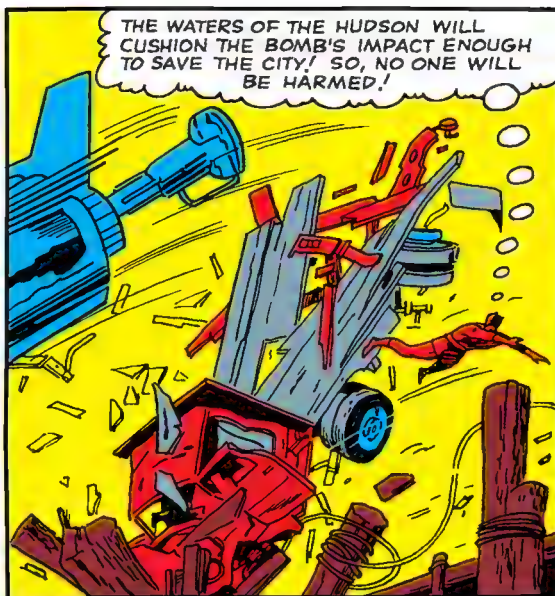
ATTUMA! MERCILESS WARLORD OF THE DEEP! ATTUMA, WHO INTERCEPTED THE EMOTION CHARGER OF DR. DOOM-- THE IMPULSE THAT WAS MEANT FOR SUB-MARINER HIMSELF!*



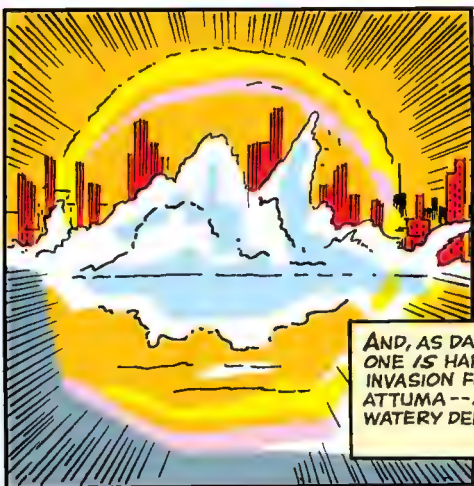
BUT, THE MOST DRAMATIC COINCIDENCE OF THE YEAR OCCURS AT THAT INSTANT! FOR, CAREENING MADLY TOWARDS THE WATERFRONT, IS A SPEEDING TRUCK-- CARRYING A DEADLY CARGO--!



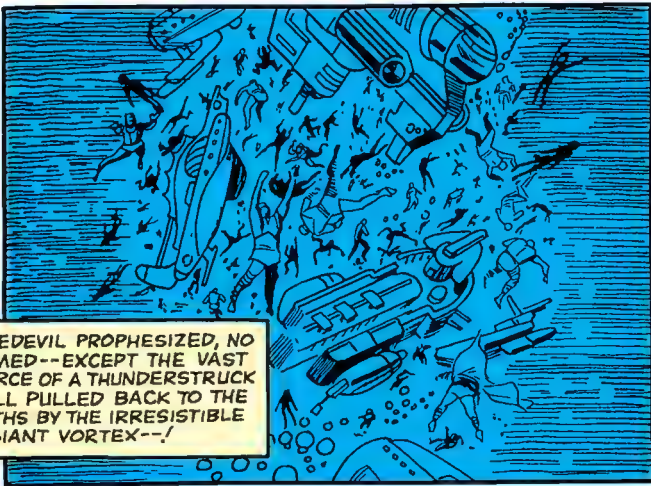
I MADE IT! NOW, I'VE ONLY SECONDS IN WHICH TO LEAP TO SAFETY--!



THE WATERS OF THE HUDSON WILL CUSHION THE BOMB'S IMPACT ENOUGH TO SAVE THE CITY! SO, NO ONE WILL BE HARMED!



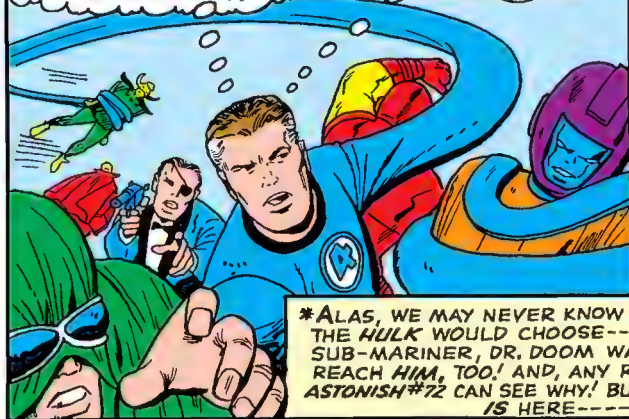
AND, AS DAREDEVIL PROPHECIZED, NO ONE IS HARMED--EXCEPT THE VAST INVASION FORCE OF A THUNDERSTRUCK ATTUMA--ALL PULLED BACK TO THE WATERY DEPTHS BY THE IRRESISTIBLE GIANT VORTEX--!



AND, UNAWARE OF WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED AT THE WATERFRONT, WE FIND...

OUR FORCES ARE TOO EVENLY MATCHED! IF ONLY WE HAD THE POWER OF THE HULK! AND YET-- WOULD HE FIGHT ON OUR SIDE??*

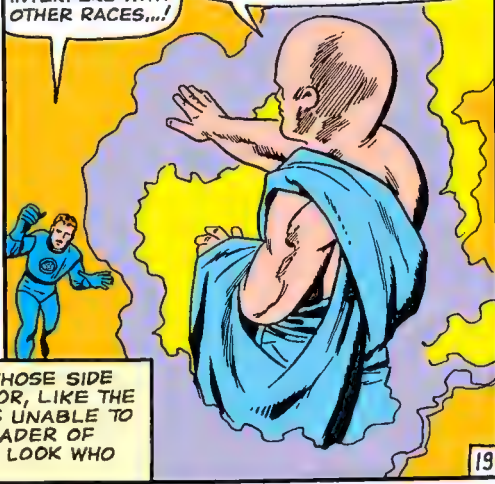
I'VE GOT TO BREAK AWAY! I HEAR SOMEONE CALLING-- AS THOUGH FROM ANOTHER WORLD!



*ALAS, WE MAY NEVER KNOW WHOSE SIDE THE HULK WOULD CHOOSE--FOR, LIKE THE SUB-MARINER, DR. DOOM WAS UNABLE TO REACH HIM, TOO! AND, ANY READER OF ASTONISH#72 CAN SEE WHY! BUT, LOOK WHO IS HERE----

THE WATCHER!! BUT--I THOUGHT YOU WERE FORBIDDEN TO INTERFERE WITH OTHER RACES...!

IT IS SO WRITTEN! AND YET --IF YOU WILL DARE VENTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN WITH ME --YOU MAY FIND THE KEY TO VICTORY!

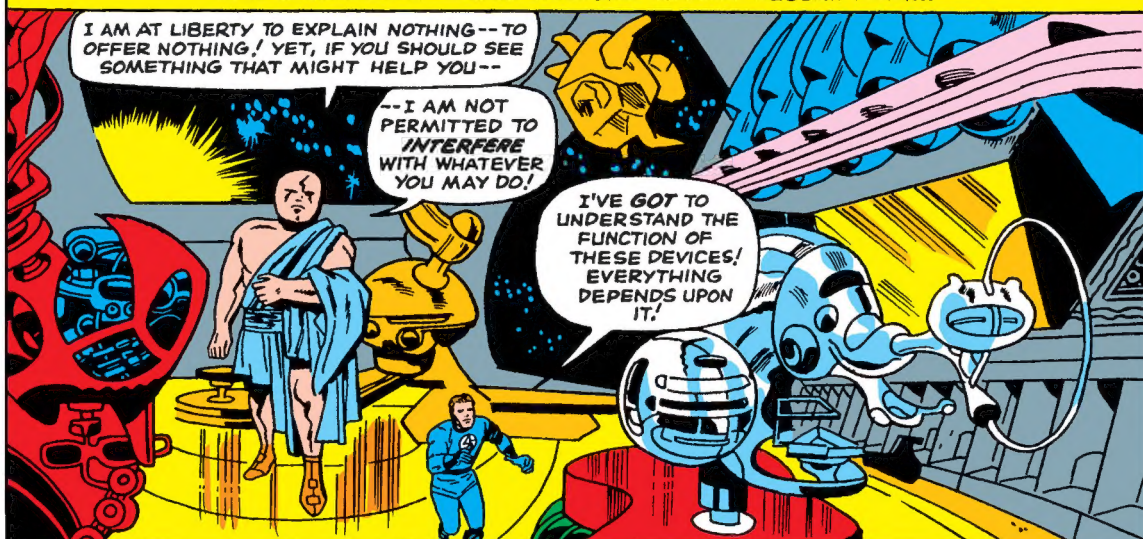


INSTEAD OF TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT, WITH A SIMPLE EXAGGERATED DRAWING, WE NOW PRESENT THE PUBLISHED PHOTO OF A JOURNEY THRU THE FOURTH DIMENSION, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SCIENCE BUFFS AMONG YOU--!

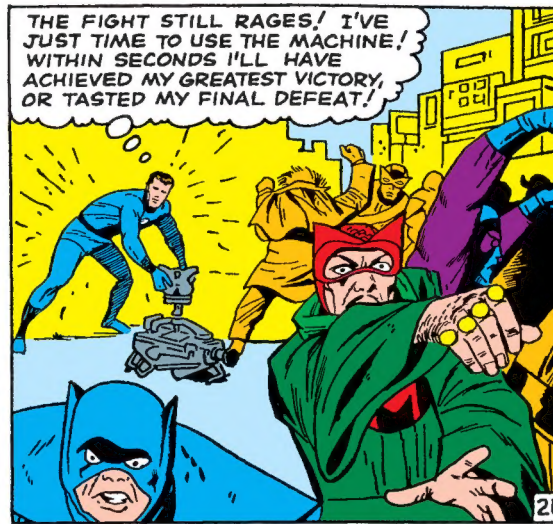
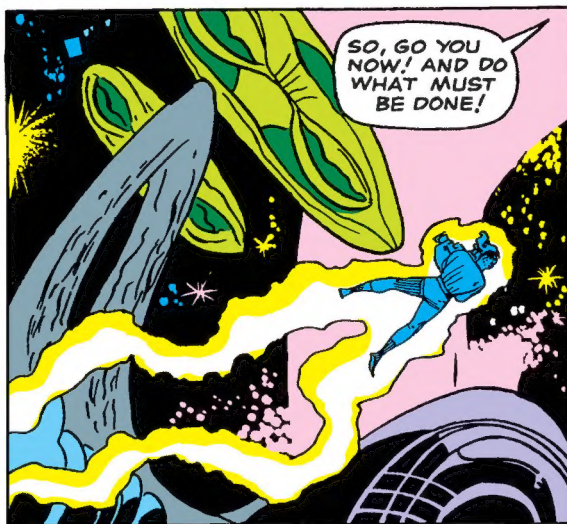
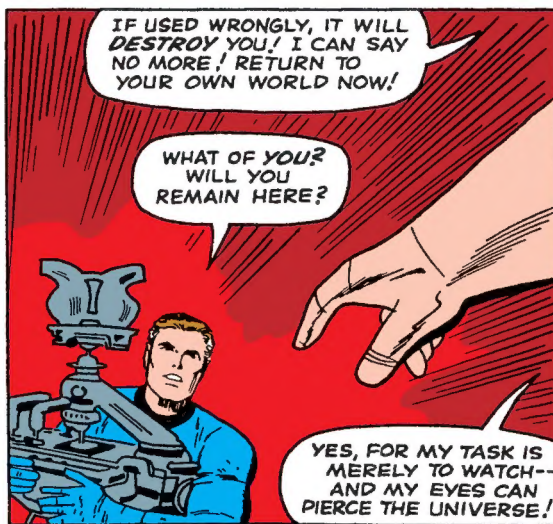
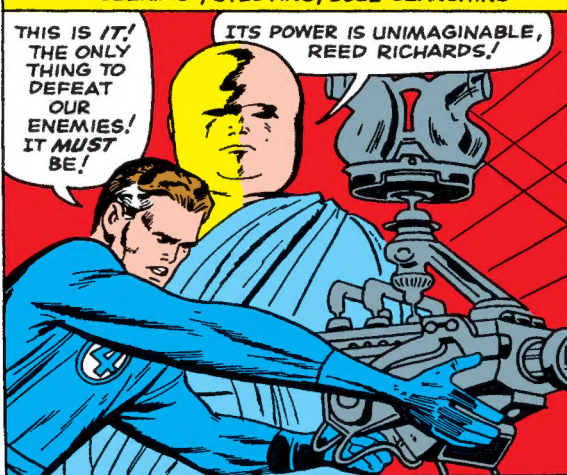
WHERE
IS OUR
DESTINATION?

THERE ARE NO WORDS
IN YOUR LANGUAGE TO
DESCRIBE ITS LOCATION,
MORTAL ONE! BUT,
SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT
IT IS--THE HOME OF
THE WATCHER!

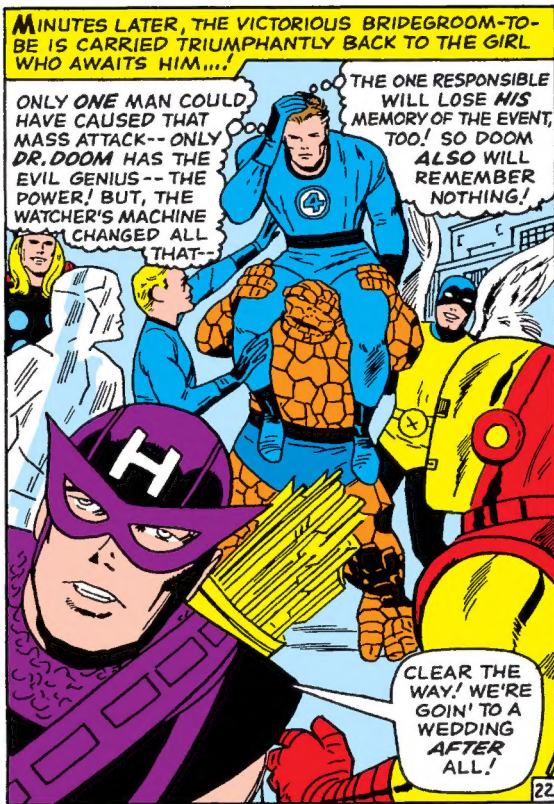
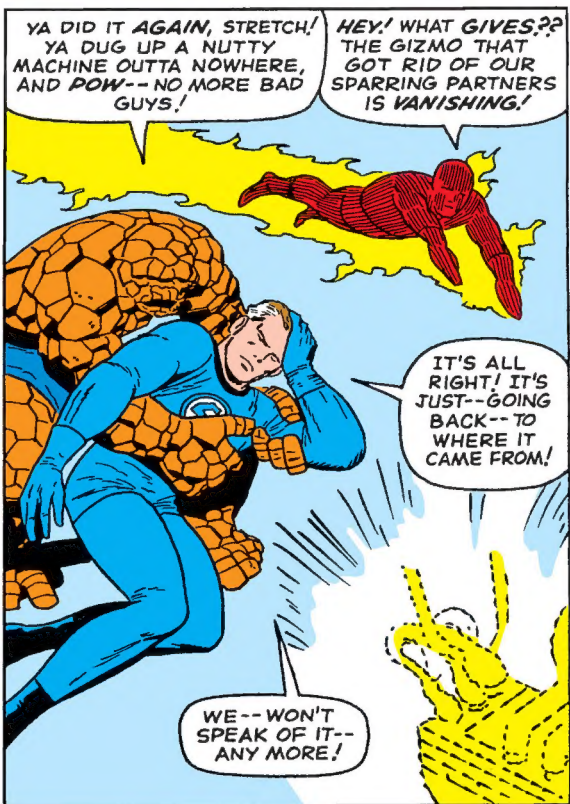
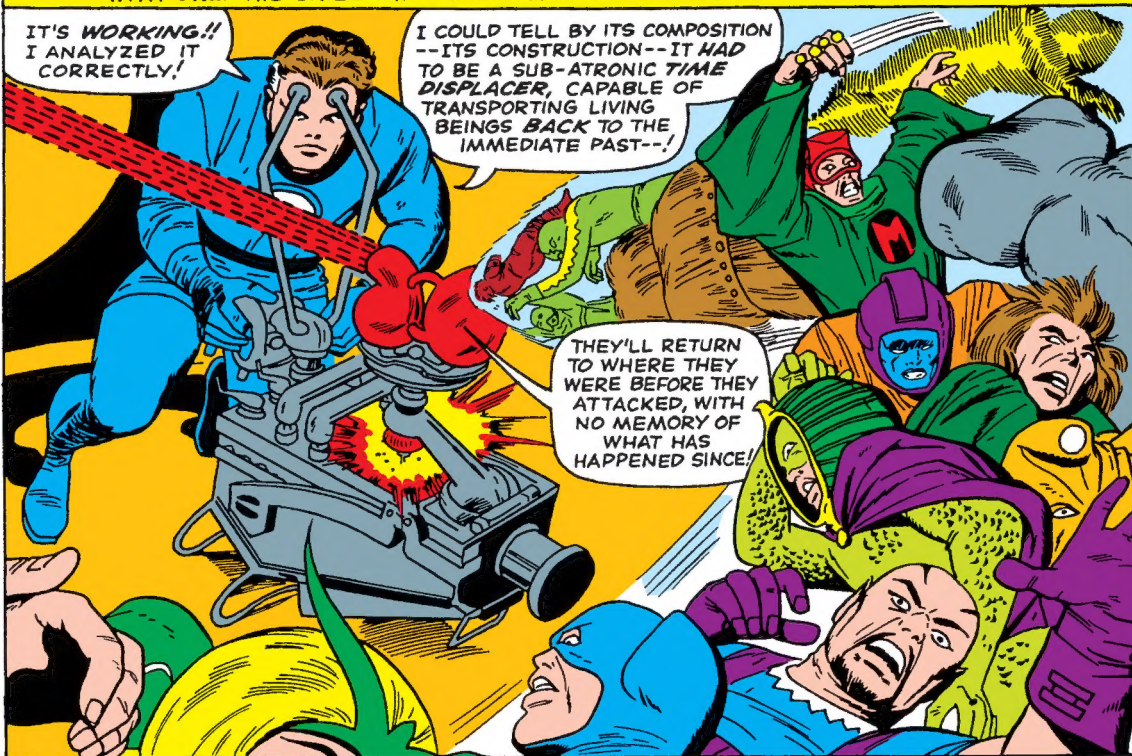
IN WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, EARTH'S MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTIST FINDS HIMSELF IN A LABORATORY WHOSE WONDERS BEGGER DESCRIPTION....!

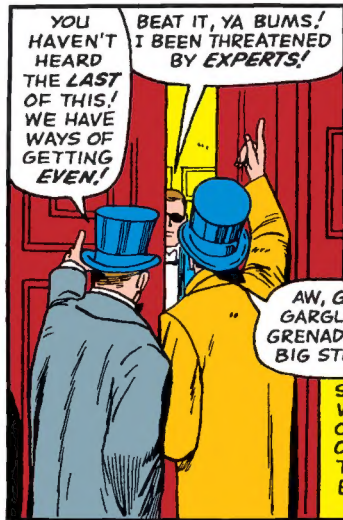
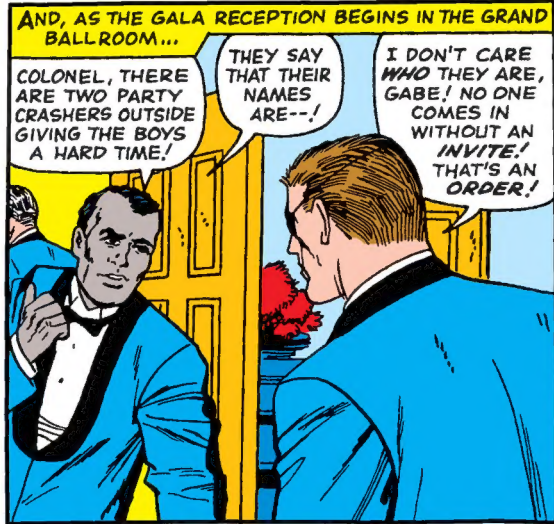
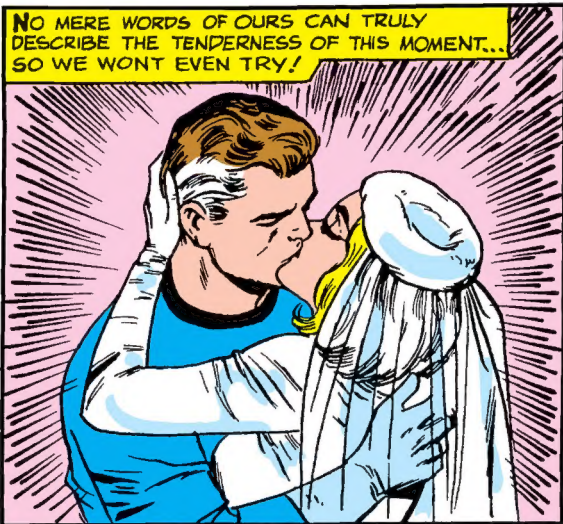
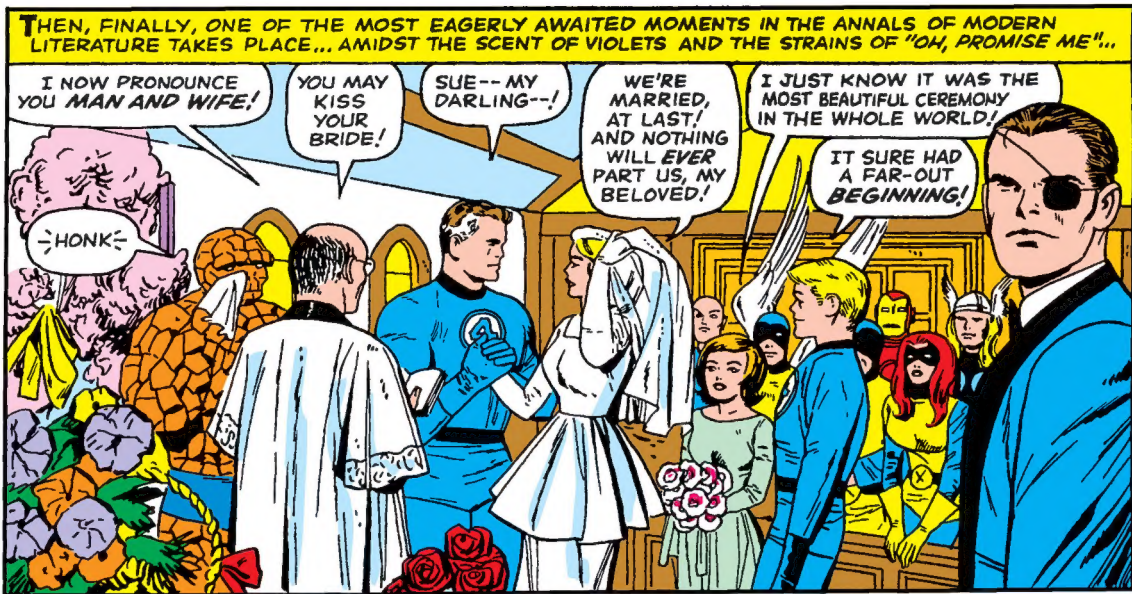


THEN, AFTER LONG, AGONIZING MOMENTS OF SEEKING, STUDYING, SOUL-SEARCHING--



AND THEN, THIS MAN WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO KNOWLEDGE, TO THE MASTERY OF SCIENCE-- THIS CRUSADER WHO NEVER LEARNED THE MEANING OF SURRENDER-- THIS LEADER OF THE MOST FAMOUS FIGHTING TEAM EARTH HAS EVER KNOWN-- DARES TO ACTIVATE A TOTALLY ALIEN WEAPON, WITH ONLY HIS SKILL AND HIS COURAGE TO BOLSTER HIM--UNTIL FINALLY--





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